

# DINNER AT EIGHT

By GEORGE S. KAUFMAN  
and EDNA FERBER



J. L. FRENCH, 25 West 45th St., New York

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Comedy. 3 acts. By John van Druten and Lloyd Morris. 3 males, 6 females. Interior. Costumes, 1909.

The literate and charming comedy which delighted New York for months with Flora Robson in the leading role. The play has to do with a middle-aged and repressed English spinster who is sent to America to live with her aunt. The time is 1909. Rhoda is in love with her cousin whom she has known since both were children. The cousin, who treats her with condescension and misappraisal of her qualities, fancies himself in love with an actress. The manner in which this engaging woman of character, Rhoda, puts her feminine resources to the test and wins her slightly slow-witted cousin, is the story of the comedy. "A superb achievement . . . a perfect comedy."—*New York World-Telegram*. "Gay, giddy, romantic and civilized."—*New York Daily Mirror*.

(Royalty, \$35.00.).

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# DINNER AT EIGHT

*A PLAY IN THREE ACTS*

BY  
GEORGE S. KAUFMAN  
AND  
EDNA FERBER

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## "DINNER AT EIGHT"

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FROM THE SOCIETY COLUMN OF *THE*  
*NEW YORK TIMES*

. . . . who will sail for Bermuda on the tenth.

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Mr. and Mrs. Oliver Jordan, of 927 Park Avenue, entertained at dinner last night in honor of Lord and Lady Ferncliffe. Their guests included Miss Carlotta Vance, Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Packard, Dr. and Mrs. J. Wayne Talbot, and Mr. Larry Renault. Following the dinner Mr. and Mrs. Jordan and their guests attended a musical comedy.

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The list of patronesses for the Riverdale House benefit will include Mrs. G. Orton Stanhope . . .



## DINNER AT EIGHT

### STORY OF THE PLAY

Mrs. Jordan, of the fashionable New York Jordans, is responsible for this many-sided episode in New York life. Lord and Lady Ferncliffe, bound for New York, have accepted by wireless an invitation to dine at her house. Whereupon she sits down to the telephone to invite as guests the people who are eligible, and the flurry of organizing a dinner gets under way. "Dinner At Eight" goes skipping around the city to reveal the background of each of the invited guests. At dinner they will be an immaculate gathering revealing nothing of themselves. But while Mrs. Jordan is absorbed in the turmoil of organizing a dinner you acquire information of which she is quite unaware. She does not know, for example, that her husband is failing in business and that he is stricken with heart disease that is numbering his days. She does not know that the flamboyant Dan Packard, whom she is inviting, is secretly acquiring the old family business that pays for her dinner, nor that Mrs. Packard has been relieving the boredom of her footless existence by a secret amour with Doctor Talbot. Nor does Mrs. Jordan know that the famous movie star, Larry Renault, is her daughter's lover, or that Renault, for all his pompous grandeur, is penniless and on the brink of suicide. She knows nothing of the tragic drama that is going on at that moment in her

servants' hall. All this hidden anguish which touches her vitally and gives her guests strange relationships, Mrs. Jordan has neither the time nor the ability to comprehend.

At the last moment Lord and Lady Ferncliffe break their engagement and remove the only reason there can be for such an imposing assembly. In the concluding scene, set in the Jordan drawing-room, all the guests save one dutifully gather, hear the news of the nobility's defection, chatter innocuously and drift off to the dining-room.



Copy of program of the first performance of  
 "DINNER AT EIGHT" as produced by Sam H.  
 Harris at the Music Box, New York, with the fol-  
 lowing cast:

MILLICENT JORDAN	Ann Andrews	•
DORA	Mary Murray	•
GUSTAVE	Gregory Gaye	✓
OLIVER JORDAN	Malcolm Duncan	✓
PAULA JORDAN	Marguerite Churchill	•
RICCI	Cesar Romero	✓
HATTIE LOOMIS	Margaret Dale	✓
MISS COPELAND	Vera Hurst	•
CARLOTTA VANCE	Constance Collier	•
DAN PACKARD	Paul Harvey	✓
KITTY PACKARD	Judith Wood	•
TINA	Janet Fox	•
DR. J. WAYNE TALBOT	Austin Fairman	•
LARRY RENAULT	Conway Tearle	✓
THE BELLBOY	Robert Griffith	•
THE WAITER	James Seeley	•
MAX KANE	Sam Levene	•
MR. HATFIELD	William McFadden	•
MISS ALDEN	Ethel Intropodi	•
LUCY TALBOT	Olive Wyndham	•
MRS. WENDEL	Dorothy Walters	•
JO STENGEL	Frank Manning	•
MR. FITCH	George Alison	•
ED LOOMIS	Hans Robert	•

## THE SCENES

### ACT ONE

SCENE I: *Upstairs sitting-room in the New York  
 house of Mr. and Mrs. Oliver Jordan.  
 Ten A.M.*

SCENE II: *Oliver Jordan's office. Two-thirty P.M.*

SCENE III: *The home of the Packards. Four-thirty.*

SCENE IV: *The Jordan sitting-room. Five-thirty.*

## ACT TWO

*A Week Later.*

SCENE I: *Larry Renault's apartment in the Hotel Versailles. Four P.M.*

SCENE II: *Dr. Talbot's office. Five o'clock.*

SCENE III: *Butler's pantry in the home of the Jordans. Five-thirty.*

SCENE IV. *The sitting-room. Six o'clock.*

## ACT THREE

SCENE I: *The Packard home. Seven-thirty.*

SCENE II: *Larry Renault's apartment. Seven-forty-five.*

SCENE III: *The Jordan drawing-room. Eight o'clock.*

## DESCRIPTION OF CHARACTERS

MILLCENT JORDAN: *She is a pretty, rather vapid woman of thirty-nine.*

DORA: *A maid, young and attractive.*

GUSTAVE: *The butler, is about thirty-five, of light complexion and good-looking in a vaguely foreign way.*

OLIVER JORDAN: *A man in his early forties; quiet, well-bred, sensitive. You are rather surprised to learn that he is in business.*

PAULA JORDAN: *Nineteen, modern, chic.*

RICCI *is a tall, saturnine Italian; slim, graceful and a little sinister.*

HATTIE LOOMIS: *MRS. JORDAN's sister. A few years older than MILLCENT, and attractive-looking in spite of a harassed and rather bitter expression.*

MISS COPELAND *is a spare and spinsterish forty-eight.*

CARLOTTA VANCE *is a battered beauty of, perhaps, fifty-three. She cannot be said to be faded, for there still is about her a magnificent vitality and zest. Her figure is gone, for she likes good living, and in the past twelve or fifteen years has given up the struggle. There clings to her, intangibly, much of the splendor, the success, the*

## 8 DESCRIPTION OF CHARACTERS

*elan of the old days when she was a famous theatrical beauty and the mistress of millions.*

DAN PACKARD is one of those big, vital men; bellowing, self-important, too successful. His clothes are noticeable. He seems never to sit down; ramps and gesticulates as he talks, and he talks a great deal. He is always in the midst of a big deal, and curiously enough it really is a big deal. Every now and then, in his talk or in his manner, there crops up a word or gesture reminiscent of his western mining days.

KITTY PACKARD: *A pretty woman of twenty-nine; the slightly faded wild-rose Irish type. She was Kitty Sheehan before her marriage. There is, in her face, the petulance of the idle and empty-headed wife.*

TINA: *A somewhat hard-faced, capable and shifty girl of twenty-five or six.*

DOCTOR TALBOT is happy in the possession of a good figure, a conventionally handsome face, a dark neat mustache, a reassuring bedside manner. Perhaps forty-six.

LARRY RENAULT is a handsome man in his early forties, with the perfect profile that so gracefully lends itself to a successful motion picture career. His figure still passes, but about the whole man there are the unmistakable marks of middle-age, abetted by pretty steady drinking, increasing failure, and disappointment. It is a vain and weak face, but not unappealing.

EDDIE: *The bellboy.*

MAX KANE: *A small, tight, slim, eel-like man in his thirties; swarthy, neat, and very Broadway. He is unmistakably Jewish, but he does not talk*



## DESCRIPTION OF CHARACTERS 9

*with an accent, unless it is the accent of the Cockney New Yorker.*

MR. HATFIELD: *A suave figure in cutaway coat and striped trousers.*

MISS ALDEN: *She is about twenty-seven, poised, capable without being bustling, intelligent, and attractive in her white uniform.*

LUCY TALBOT: *She is a wren-like, somewhat faded little figure, but possessed of a quiet power, too, as well as poise and gentle breeding.*

MRS. WENDEL is Swedish, but with no trace of accent. *She is an ample woman in her mid-fifties. Her natural amiability is clouded at the moment by a bad tooth, and her face is tied up in a great toothache bandage.*

JO STENGEL is about sixty. *His hair is well grayed. He is kindly looking. Time has refined his features. His eyes are shrewd, his manner quiet, yet there is about him the indefinable air of the showman.*

FITCH: *In his business suit and eyeglasses, is the solid man of affairs.*

ED LOOMIS would be one of those insignificant, grayish-looking men if it were not that he is distinguished a trifle by his air of irascibility, due, probably, to faulty digestion and the world in which he finds himself.



# DINNER AT EIGHT

## ACT ONE

### SCENE I

*Upstairs sitting-room in the Oliver Jordans' home. A door down Right leads to the hall. Above it is a small table on which is a lamp; above that a fireplace over which hangs a Cezanne landscape. In the Center of the back wall, three large windows, curtained, draped, and with Venetian blinds which, though drawn, admit brilliant sunshine. In front of the window, a long table on which are two lamps, books and magazines. A sofa down Right, an upholstered chair Left of Center. A door leading to MILLICENT'S bedroom up Left. Down Left, against the wall, is a desk and small chair. Right of the chair is a breakfast table. Altogether, it is a luxurious and rather feminine room.*

*It is ten o'clock of a bright November morning.*

*MILlicent JORDAN is breakfasting in a negligee. She is a pretty, rather vapid woman of thirty-nine. She is dividing her attention between her orange juice and the letter in her hand. A folded copy of the "Herald-Tribune" is on the chair L.C.*

*As the Curtain rises, DORA, a maid, young*

*and attractive, comes from the bedroom, L., a dress thrown over her arm. She crosses and goes into the hall, R. As she reaches Center, GUSTAVE, the butler, enters R. from the hall. GUSTAVE is about thirty-five, of light complexion, and good-looking in a vaguely foreign way. He brings a silver pot of coffee.*

MILLICENT. (*Feeling the side of the coffee-pot*) I hope it's hot this time.

GUSTAVE. Very hot, madam. (*He turns to leave. Her voice halts him.*)

MILLICENT. (*Pouring coffee*) I shan't be home to lunch. Mr. Jordan and I are out to dinner. I don't know about Miss Paula. I'll have to ask her.

GUSTAVE. Very good, Madam.

MILLICENT. Tell Ricci I want to see him before he takes Mr. Jordan to the office.

(*GUSTAVE nods; exits R. MILLICENT has poured her coffee; starts to drink it as OLIVER JORDAN enters R. A man in his early forties, quiet, well-bred, sensitive. You are rather surprised to learn that he is in business. His topcoat is over his arm, his hat in hand. He has just popped in to say good-morning and goodbye.*)

OLIVER. (*Hat and coat on couch*) Hello, darling. You're early!

MILLICENT. Oh, hello.

OLIVER. We could have had breakfast together if I'd known. Unless you think people might talk. (*He stoops for a perfunctory kiss. She, her eye still on the letter in her hand, presents a cool, wifely cheek. He catches sight of a plate of thimble-size popovers on the table. Begins to nibble one*) Mm! They didn't give me any of those.

MILLICENT. (*Absently, busy with her mail*) I



shouldn't have them, either. (*Dashes a printed card into the waste-basket*) Join Cooper Union!

OLIVER. How'd you sleep? Better? (*Sits on arm of chair L.C., glancing through newspaper.*)

MILLICENT. Never closed an eye. Then the minute I dropped off the fire-engines woke me up.

OLIVER. Where do they go every night? I've never seen a fire in New York. I think they go around looking for them.

MILLICENT. (*Who has opened another letter*) Well! This is too shocking! (*OLIVER looks up from paper.*) Peggy Mainwaring is starting a night club in her lovely old house in Sutton Place.

OLIVER. Really?

MILLICENT. (*Still reading*) "Opening attraction—Schnozzle Levine."

OLIVER. Old Lady Mainwaring must be whirling in her grave.

MILLICENT. (*Tosses letter into waste-basket*) Well, at least it'll keep Peggy out of Harlem.

OLIVER. (*Rises. About to go*) What's on for tonight? We're home, I hope.

MILLICENT. Oh, now, darling, you know perfectly well tonight's the Hilliard's costume party.

OLIVER. Oh, look here, Millicent. D'you mean I have to go as something?

MILLICENT. Oh, you'll love it I got you Richard the Conqueror, and I'm a Floradora Girl. (*Returns to her letters.*)

OLIVER. Makes an ideal couple.

MILLICENT. I wanted Tarzan for you, but it's so draughty at the Hilliards'!

OLIVER. Look here—it's a late affair. We can have dinner at home, h'm?

MILLICENT. We're dining with the Cartwrights and going on from there.

OLIVER. And I have to go through dinner in that

armor! (GUSTAVE enters R., carrying radiogram on small tray; crosses to MILLICENT.)

MILLICENT. (*A soothing smile*) Well, we're home tomorrow night.

OLIVER. Thank God!

MILLICENT. The Martins are coming in for bridge. (*His look says, "And you call that an evening at home!"* OLIVER picks up his topcoat; starts to put it on.)

GUSTAVE. This just came, Mrs. Jordan. (GUSTAVE goes out R.)

MILLICENT. Oh, good! Wait a minute, Oliver. (*Opens and reads radio to herself, mumbling a word or two as she deciphers its meaning*) "Delighted. Friday——" Listen to this, Oliver. I've got the Ferncliffes!

OLIVER. (*Momentarily arrested*) What?

MILLICENT. Lord and Lady Ferncliffe. They get in this morning—on the *Aquitania*. I sent them a radio last night, and they're coming to dinner Friday. Wasn't that bright of me?

OLIVER. Yes—if you want the Ferncliffes.

MILLICENT. Want them! Why, you *know* everybody'll pounce on them. Besides, we've got to have them. They entertained us in London.

OLIVER. (*Sits arm of L.C. chair*) Yes, and very dull it was, too.

MILLICENT. Oh, I don't know. I like those formal English dinners.

OLIVER. Not that one. All family portraits and Australian mutton and fox-hunting and Lloyd George. And the guests! A lot of people who had been buried for years, and who got up just for that dinner.

MILLICENT. Don't be American, Oliver. It's a great coup for me to get them Friday. That gives me just a week.

OLIVER. Friday!—I was taking Paula to the opera.

MILLCENT. Huh? I thought just a small dinner. What do you think? Ten's a nice number.

OLIVER. (*Overcome*) Oo! Fascinating number.

MILLCENT. Of course it's terribly short notice. I thought I'd ask the Talbots—the Doctor and Lucy. The Ferncliffes and you and I are six. And your precious Carlotta Vance. Would you like me to ask her?

OLIVER. Oh, fine! I haven't seen her.

MILLCENT. I think it's sweet of me. (*Thoughtfully*) Of course, she's never met the Ferncliffes. She goes with a much faster crowd over there.

OLIVER. Carlotta! She knows everybody in Europe.

MILLCENT. Not the Ferncliffes. She's too flamboyant. Now let me see. I'll need just one more couple, and an extra man. (*Rummaging through her address book*) I'll be all morning telephoning—Talbot—Talbot, Butterfield eight—six-three-two-five. (*Scribbles it on a slip of paper.*)

OLIVER. (*Who has been turning something over in his mind, rises*) Look here, dear. If you're looking for another couple—

MILLCENT. (*Her eye still on the slip*) Butterfi—what?

OLIVER. If you need another couple I wish you'd ask Dan Packard and his wife.

MILLCENT. You're joking!

OLIVER. I know it sounds funny, but there's a reason.

MILLCENT. But with the Ferncliffes!

OLIVER. They'll like him. Over there they like that two-fisted Western stuff.

MILLCENT. And what about her! I suppose they'll like her, too!

OLIVER. They'll think she's very refreshing. Look

here, Millicent, I wouldn't ask this if it weren't important to me. You know that. Packard's become a big man in the last year or so. I don't want to go into details, but it's—damned important.

MILLICENT. (*Realizing his earnestness, and weakening slightly*) Oh, Oliver.

(PAULA JORDAN *enters R. Nineteen, modern, chic. She is dressed for the street.*)

PAULA. (*Pulling on her gloves*) Off to the marts of trade. Hello, Mother! Dad, what're you lolling in boudoirs for? What's become of the shipping business? (*Kisses him on cheek.*)

OLIVER. What indeed! Mm! Don't you look smart!

PAULA. Next year's style. I won't be home for dinner, Mother. Ooh, I'm late! (*DORA enters R. with fresh linen over her arm; crosses to bedroom.*)

MILLICENT. What about this afternoon, Paula? Where am I meeting you?

PAULA. Hm?

OLIVER. (*Has picked up hat and coat. Looks at MILLICENT*) Look here, Millicent, you'll do that for me, won't you?

PAULA. Do what?

MILLICENT. Well, if it's as important as you say—

OLIVER. Believe me—it is.

MILLICENT. Oh, well—

OLIVER. That's my brave girl! Thanks— Drop you, Paula?

PAULA. (*With a shake of the head*) Walking. (*OLIVER exits R.*)

MILLICENT. (*Calls after him*) I want to see Ricci before you go.

OLIVER. (*From down the hall*) Right!



PAULA. Mother, I can't meet you this afternoon. I simply can't.

MILLICENT. Paula, you've put it off time after time. The monogramming takes months. When do expect to get things?

PAULA. It can't be today. We're giving a tea at the office for Chanel.

MILLICENT. If that silly magazine is more important to you— After all, *I'm* not the one that's being married.

PAULA. But there's loads of time.

MILLICENT. There's not loads of time. You're being married in three months, and not a stitch of trousseau.

PAULA. I'm not the girl to gloat over a linen closet. All tied up with little pink bows. (*A vicious gesture*) I'll get everything when the time comes.

MILLICENT. Well, for an engaged girl you're certainly casual. Do you act like that with Ernest?

PAULA. Ernest says I'm a flawless fiancée.

MILLICENT. Oh, by the way, what was all this last night?

PAULA. What?

MILLICENT. Ernest called up this morning in a perfect dither. When you weren't up he asked to talk to me.

PAULA. Oh, yes.

MILLICENT. "Did I know how you were feeling, and were you any better?" I told him I didn't know there was anything the matter with you, and he said he brought you home at ten last night with a terrible headache.

PAULA. Yes, I did have. But I'm all right now. (*Starts R.*)

MILLICENT. I distinctly heard you come in at four this morning.

PAULA. (*A trifle dashed*) Oh! Yes! Well—I went out again. (*Great frankness*) I took three

aspirins, and my headache vanished, and there it was, only eleven o'clock, and some of the crowd called up and said there was a marvelous party going on—so I went out again.

MILLICENT. Well, I hope you've got charm enough to explain that to Ernest. Where was the party?

PAULA. Oh—around. We went over to Twenty-One and—look, darling, I've just got to run. I'll be home before dinner. I'm going out with Ernest. Will you be here?

MILLICENT. I suppose so. (*DORA appears in L. doorway.*)

PAULA. 'Bye! (*Goes out R. quickly.*)

DORA. Mrs. Jordan, do you want the pink to go?

MILLICENT. What?

DORA. I didn't pack the pink because I don't think it needs cleaning.

(*GUSTAVE enters R.*)

MILLICENT. Oh, I thought it did. I'll look at it. (*Disappearing through L. door, her voice coming out from the next room*) I've worn it five times and I'm sure it must be filthy.

DORA. (*Whispers*) Hello. (*Comes down to GUSTAVE. GUSTAVE draws DORA to him; takes her in his arms. DORA pleased, but fearing discovery; points toward MRS. JORDAN in bedroom; whispers*) I've got to go. (*She leans close to him.*)

MILLICENT. (*Off stage*) Dora! (*DORA scoots. GUSTAVE picks up the laden tray; goes out R. The voices of MILLICENT and DORA are heard from the bedroom*) Oh, no, Dora. I think it looks dreadful. Pack it in with the others. Really, pink is almost as extravagant as white. It's so hard to keep clean.

DORA. It looks lovely on you.

MILLICENT. I wish I looked well in black. It isn't very good on me. I think I'll wear the beige today.

Get it out, will you, Dora? I imagine it needs pressing.

*(As the voices are heard in the bedroom, the figure of RICCI, the chauffeur, appears in the R. doorway. He stands a moment, hears the voices of MILLICENT and DORA, and takes a step or two into the room, his eyes on the bedroom doorway. RICCI is a tall, saturnine Italian; slim, graceful and a little sinister. He is wearing his chauffeur's uniform, cap in hand.)*

DORA. It probably does.

MILLICENT. Goodness, yes! Take it right down. Have you got everything there for Ricci? I wonder what in the world's keeping him.

DORA. *(Comes in L., the beige dress over her arm. She is walking quickly; sees RICCI, who stands regarding her steadily. She starts to go past him. He tries to block her way. She evades him, then calls)* He's here now, Mrs. Jordan.

MILLICENT. *(Off)* Send him right in, will you? *(Their eyes hold a second. DORA makes herself very small and aloof as she disdainfully turns from him. RICCI straightens his coat as he goes toward L. door. DORA exits R.)*

RICCI. Yes, Madam.

MILLICENT. *(Still unseen in the bedroom)* Ricci, after you've taken Mr. Jordan to the office—*(She appears in the bedroom doorway at this point with box)*—take this box to Charvet—you know—you've been there before—East Fifty-fifth Street. And then you're coming back here for me in time for lunch. Is that clear?

RICCI. *(Takes the box; turns to go R.)* Yes, madam.

MILLICENT. And oh, yes! Stop at Cartier's and see if my stationery is ready. *(He half turns, as if*

*for further orders.)* That's all— Oh, my goodness! I nearly forgot. *(Goes quickly to her desk. Writes a few words on a card as she continues talking)* As soon as you drop Mr. Jordan, go up to Thorley's and get two dozen Talisman roses—long-stemmed. And remember—Talisman.

RICCI. Talisman.

MILLCENT. That's right. *(Has finished the card. Is addressing the envelope)* And don't have them sent. Take them over yourself to—*(Writing)*—Lady Ferncliffe— Where's that radio—*(Searches her desk. Finds the radio)* Waldorf-Astoria. *(Writes "Waldorf-Astoria")* They'll know. They get in this morning. Is that clear?

RICCI. Perfectly.

MILLCENT. *(A little abstracted)* I think that's all. *(RICCI goes out R. MILLCENT sighs deeply. Shuffles a few papers; finds the one she is seeking. With an eye half on this paper she dials the telephone number)* Is this Doctor Talbot's home?—Is Mrs. Talbot there? This is Mrs. Oliver Jordan. I want to speak to Mrs. Talbot— *(She is turning the pages of her own private address book, hunting down certain telephone numbers as she waits)* Lucy!—This is Millicent— How are you?—Oh, I'm fine— Listen, Lucy dear, I'm giving a little dinner for Lord and Lady Ferncliffe. You know there're here from England. I want you and the Doctor to come. A week from tonight—Friday—that'll be lovely. I'm only asking a few people whom I know they'd like. I'm inviting you informally like this because the time's so short, and anyway it's just a small dinner— Yes, that's right. Friday, the twenty-third, at eight o'clock. *(HATTIE LOOMIS, MRS. JORDAN'S sister, appears in the R. doorway. A few years older than MILLCENT, and attractive-looking in spite of a harassed and rather bitter expression. Her clothes are modish enough, but not too new. She is not*

*shabby; neither can she be called smart. As usual, she is carrying a smallish lumpy brown paper parcel. MILLICENT sees her; waves a hand*) We'll probably see a play afterward. I think they'd like that. Though there's nothing to see— That'll be fine— Goodbye!

HATTIE. What's that? Covers for thirty again?

MILLICENT. No, no. Only ten. The Ferncliffes are over here and I've just got to entertain them. They gave a dinner for us in London.

HATTIE. That's fair enough— Listen, Millie, can I have a look at that blue flat crepe of Paula's— remember?—that you promised me for Joan? Everything's got capes this year and I had this piece of blue velvet—(*Sits, R. sofa, beginning to open her paper parcel*)—that I thought might do. But if it's the wrong shade I'll have to pick up something else.

MILLICENT. Do you have to have it right now? I'm simply—

HATTIE. Don't you bother. I'll tell Dora. I saw her as I— (*Up to hall doorway quickly. Calls*) Dora! (*Back into the room a step or two*) Because if it doesn't match I want to get right down. Everything gets picked over. (*DORA appears in R. doorway.*)

MILLICENT. Dora, will you go to Miss Paula's room and get that blue crepe dress of hers? You know?

DORA. The evening one?

MILLICENT. Yes. I want to show it to my sister. (*DORA goes out R.*)

HATTIE. (*Crossing to L.C. chair*) I hope it's right. Oh, well— When's your dinner?

MILLICENT. A week from tonight.

HATTIE. Just ran into Oliver downstairs. I thought he looked a little underdone. (*Sits L.C., the piece of velvet in her hand, draping it over her arm.*)

MILLICENT. (*Absently. She is at her desk*)  
What?

HATTIE. As if he could stand a few violet-rays.

MILLICENT. (*Fishes from a desk pigeonhole an impressive announcement card with two colored tickets attached by clips*) Oh, Hattie, what are you doing—(*Consulting card*)—next Monday afternoon?

HATTIE. (*Cagily*) I don't know. Why?

MILLICENT. That Russian Prince of Alison Cruikshank's is giving a talk against Communism in the Rose Room of the Park Lane.

HATTIE. Sorry. I've got to see a man about a dog.

MILLICENT. (*As she turns back to her desk*) Well, I just thought you might use the tickets if you weren't doing anything.

HATTIE. (*One of those indrawn society laughs*) Thank you!

MILLICENT. I wish now I'd never started this miserable dinner. (*In inspiration*) Tommy Van Veen!

HATTIE. What about him?

MILLICENT. My extra man!

HATTIE. He's nothing extra.

MILLICENT. If I can only get him. He'd fit in so— (*Turns to her sister*) What do you think? Now, here's the list. (*Reaches for her slip of paper*) I've got the Ferncliffes, of course—that's what makes it so difficult—you see, she's so deaf you have to yell your head off, and all he knows is Parliament and grouse.

HATTIE. Gives you a nice start.

MILLICENT. That isn't the worst. Oliver's got some business thing up his sleeve and insists on my asking those Packards. You know who they are. All the money in the world, and bellows at the top of his lungs.



HATTIE. (*Brightly*) Put him next to Lady Ferncliffe.

MILLCENT. And as for *Mrs. Packard*! They say she was a check-room girl, or something. Commonest little piece. She's his second wife—years younger. Of course, it was his money.

HATTIE. It gets better and better. Tell me more about her.

MILLCENT. I met her at the races once. She was beautifully dressed. But the bracelets and the perfume and the makeup—they gave her away at fifty yards. And when she opened that little rosebud mouth—well, she spoke pure spearmint.

HATTIE. Ferncliffe'll be crazy about her. He'll probably divorce the old girl.

MILLCENT. There's one good thing—I've got the Talbots. They are sweet. And a doctor always fits in. I think I'll put him next to Carlotta Vance.

HATTIE. Oh, when did she come over?

MILLCENT. A few days ago. I ran into her at The Colony. Of course, I think she's poisonous, but I've got to have her here some time. When I think of the way she behaved that summer at Antibes. You'd think a woman of her age—

HATTIE. Why, she can't be so old.

MILLCENT. Oh, Hattie!

HATTIE. How old was she when she played "*La Valliere*"? Remember how beautiful she was, and how thrilled we were!

MILLCENT. Well, she doesn't thrill me now—but I've got to have her. We were in and out of her house all that summer. Everybody was. Sunning on her rocks and sprawling on her terrace. It's really astonishing, the people she gets around her over there. Michael Arlen and Willy Maugham and Charlie Chaplin—even Shaw came in one day. I've got to have her.

HATTIE. Yes, have her—if you're sure you don't like her. She just fits in.

MILLCENT. Oliver's fond of her. She was one of his college crushes. He says she's a child about business and advises her. If you ask me, I think she's a man-eating shark. Look at the fortune she got out of old Stanfield. And that theatre named after her. It's hers, you know.

HATTIE. I wish somebody'd name a theatre after me—The Hattie Loomis.

MILLCENT. You know, way down deep I'm really glad to have her. I want to show her there are some people she could never hope to meet over there, but that she can meet in my house.

HATTIE. I see. Who has the choice of weapons?

MILLCENT. (*Reaches for the telephone directory under her desk*) I don't suppose that Packard woman would be up at this hour. Oh, dear, when I think of that voice.

HATTIE. Wouldn't it be wonderful if they couldn't come?

MILLCENT. (*Running a finger down the P's in the directory*) Pablo—Pacific—Packard—

HATTIE. Sometimes I think there are compensations in being a poor relation.

MILLCENT. (*At the number now. Writing it on her pad*) El-do-ra-do. E-L-five—

DORA. (*Enters R., carrying the blue dress*) It was in with her summer things. I had to find it.

HATTIE. (*Rises; crosses as DORA enters. Snatches up piece of velvet*) Oh, no! It's a million miles off. (*Takes the dress from DORA*) I'll have to go down. Thanks, Dora. (*DORA goes R.*) It's lovely, though, Millie. (*Holding up the blue dress*) Joan'll look sweet in it.

MILLCENT. I never liked it much. (*Consults phone pad. Lifts receiver*) Eldorado-five—

HATTIE. Joan'll love it. I'll have to run. (*Wraps*

*dress, velvet, in a bundle, hastily*) How I hate matching things.

MILLCENT. Are you going to stay down for lunch? (*About to start dialing. Abandons it.*)

HATTIE. Oh, no, I have to be home.

MILLCENT. Hattie, if I pick you up at, say, quarter to three, will you go with me to just two places and look at some stuff for Paula? You're so good at that. She won't do anything about it. (*Starts to dial.*)  
(*WARN Dim Out.*)

HATTIE. I was going to start this little cape for Joan. She wants to wear it tomorrow night.

MILLCENT. (*With a gesture that says, "Wait a second. I'm busy." Finishes dialing her number. Turns now to HATTIE*) You can do it tonight, Hattie. You know you can. You're so quick.

HATTIE. I don't like to sit and sew when Ed's home. He hates it. (*Crosses to sofa.*)

MILLCENT. Oh, he won't mind. Tell him to go to a movie. I'll pick you up at quarter to three. (*In telephone*) Could I speak to Mrs. Packard, please? This is Mrs. Oliver Jordan. Is Mrs. Packard up yet?

HATTIE. Listen, Millie, I—

MILLCENT. (*Waiting, receiver in hand*) Please, darling. Ed won't mind. How is Ed? (*Very absent.*)

HATTIE. (*Acidly*) He's got the bubonic plague.

MILLCENT. (*Concentrates on the phone*) That's fine. (*HATTIE, with a grim smile, goes out R. MILLCENT has not noticed her departure. Keeps on talking into the phone*) Mrs. Packard? How do you do, Mrs. Packard? This is Mrs. Oliver Jordan. How are you? (*Removes the receiver a few inches from her ear, with a wry look, as that voice comes over the telephone*) I hope I didn't wake you. Well, I thought this might be a strange hour, for you.

Mrs. Packard, Mr. Jordan and I are giving a small dinner for Lord and Lady Ferncliffe, two very dear friends of mine from England. We would like so much to have you and Mr. Packard come. (*She sets her teeth*) Oh, that'll be lovely. I'm so pleased. Well, I'm delighted. Don't you want to know the date? It's a week from tonight. Friday, the twenty-third. I'm inviting you informally like this because the time's so short, and anyway, it's just a small dinner. Friday, the twenty-third. Dinner at eight. (*The LIGHTS start to dim out.*) I thought we'd all go to the theatre afterward, and see a play. Though perhaps you and Mr. Packard would prefer a musical comedy.

THE LIGHTS ARE OUT.

## ACT ONE

### SCENE II

*The private office of OLIVER JORDAN, head of the Jordan Line. It is on the fifth floor of an old-fashioned red brick office building on State Street, facing the Battery. The structure dates back at least fifty years, and now is almost surrounded by modern skyscrapers. With the possible exception of a flat-topped desk c., the furnishings of the room are those of the day of old Oliver Jordan, grandfather of the present head of the steamship line. Even the chair before this desk must once have faced a cumbersome roll-top.*

*There are mahogany bookcases up Right, up Left, containing thick volumes on maritime law, shipping, and the like. Atop these cases*

*are models of ships representing the line. There is, too, a portrait of old Oliver Jordan, showing him to be a rather handsome and rock-bound old gentleman with side-whiskers and a good deal of watch-chain and collar, which hangs over a black slate mantelpiece with a coal-burning grate. For the rest, there is a wooden filing cabinet; up Right, a decrepit and scuffed leather chair Left of the desk, whose stuffing is oozing here and there. The chair is placed alongside the desk for callers. Another smaller chair is at the back, another Right of the desk. An ancient safe whose door is ornamented with a faded painting of a maritime scene, with ships, scrolls, festoons and border, up Left.*

*There is a wooden door, down Left, with a hatrack above it, and a large window down Right, through which can be seen the harbor and bay.*

*As the lights go up, MISS COPELAND is at the files, a sheaf of documents in her hand. Phone. MISS COPELAND is a spare and spinsterish forty-eight. As the LIGHTS go up, the TELEPHONE sounds from the desk. It is not the shrill insistent ring one usually hears, but a faint single tinkle. The connection has come from the outer office. She goes to the telephone.*

MISS COPELAND. Hello! Who? Yes, put him on. I'll talk to him. Yes, Mr. Kingsberry. No, he isn't. Yes, he's always back by this time. He must have gone some place else after lunch. (OLIVER enters L., puts his coat, hat and stick on the coat-tree in the corner. There is plainly something on his mind.) Just a minute, Mr. Kingsberry. He just came in. (To OLIVER) Mr. Kingsberry on the telephone.

OLIVER. All right. I'll talk to him. (MISS COPE-

LAND *starts to go L.*) When Mr. Packard gets here show him right in.

MISS COPELAND. Yes, sir. (*Goes out L.*)

OLIVER. (*At desk, into telephone*) Yes? Oh, hello, Mr. Kingsberry! I see. Oh, they are? I see. Um. Well, no, I'm not prepared to buy it right now, but you can tell Miss Satterlee and her sister for me that the Jordan stock is just as good today as it was when their father bought it—allowing, of course, for these times. I'm sure that if Mr. Satterlee had lived he'd have advised them to. Well, the stockholders' meeting is a week from Monday. I wish you'd ask them to hold off until that time. After all, their father and my father were friends for half a century. I think they'd regret any hasty action. Thank you very much for your courtesy. Goodbye. (*OLIVER hangs up the receiver, rises, walks slowly toward the window. MISS COPELAND enters L. as he gets to window.*)

MISS COPELAND. (*With great impressiveness*) Miss Carlotta Vance is here to see you.

OLIVER. Carlot—here! Outside! Carlotta! (*Rushes to L. door.*)

(*CARLOTTA VANCE is not one to wait outside. She is already on the threshold, her hands dramatically outstretched to meet his. As they meet, MISS COPELAND, lost in admiration, backs out of L. door, her eyes on CARLOTTA until the door is closed. CARLOTTA VANCE is a battered beauty of, perhaps, fifty-three. She cannot be said to be faded, for there still is about her a magnificent vitality and zest. Her figure is gone, for she likes good living, and in the past twelve or fifteen years has given up the struggle. There clings to her, intangibly, much of the splendour, the success, the elan of the old days when she was a famous theatrical beauty and the mistress*



*of millions. Her dress is rich, careless, and somewhat fussy, what with scarfs, veils, chains, furs, muff. She moves and sits with consciousness of herself. Her speech is racy, biting. She is very much on to herself. There is a little babble of greetings, cooings, exclamations.)*

CARLOTTA. Oliver! Ducky! How are you! How simply marvelous to see you! I never was so glad to see anyone in all my life! (*Kisses him dramatically, on one cheek, then on the other, embracing him.*)

OLIVER. (*At the same time*) Well, for God's sake, Lotta! This is a surprise! What brings you down here! How've you been? I heard you were over here. You're looking marvelous!

CARLOTTA. Do I? I do, don't I? And you! You're actually handsomer than ever. Oh, oh, Oliver! (*Just touches the grey at his temples*) Distinguished!

OLIVER. (*Takes her hand*) This is great! Let me look at you!

CARLOTTA. (*Describes a sweeping circle about the room, for his inspection, but the little parade ends with her rather shrewd eye encompassing the outmoded and shabby surroundings in which she finds herself*) My God, what a hole! Is this what I own stock in? Why, I thought it would be all platinum and plush. What do you make down here? Worm holes!

OLIVER. Well—good enough for my father—Gosh, but I'm glad to see you again! I read you'd landed. What're you doing over here?

CARLOTTA. (*Sinks into the depths of the old leather chair L. of desk*) Trying to mend the shattered for-tyune.

OLIVER. You picked a good day for it. And the right part of town, too. (*A gesture toward the win-*



dow) There are all our financiers, sitting on those benches. Now, who did you come way down to the Battery to see? Not *me*. (*Sitting on front of desk.*)

CARLOTTA. (*Opening her handbag, fishing a paper from among the debris*) Well, sir, not to deceive you, I came down to see—(*Gropes a moment; adjusts her lorgnette carefully. Reads from letter*)—United States Customs Inspector Isidore J. Greenbaum—the son of a bitch! (*Looks up*) Why *shouldn't* I own six fur coats?

OLIVER. Perfectly reasonable.

CARLOTTA. And then, right in front of the Customs, what did I sight but Jordan Line? And I says to meself, maybe the old gentleman is in. And here you are.

OLIVER. I'm very grateful to Mr. Greenbaum.

CARLOTTA. I told him, I said, "I didn't come to this country to *bring* money. I came to take it out." Oliver darling, I'm as flat as a mill-pond. I haven't a sou.

OLIVER. Oh, now, come, Carlotta! How about all those gilt-edged securities? And your theatre! Why, that theatre alone ought to bring you enough to live on.

CARLOTTA. That's my chief reason for coming over. To try to get rid of that rat trap.

OLIVER. What's the matter with it?

CARLOTTA. May I take you for a stroll down Forty-second Street and a little look at the Carlotta Vance Theatre? It's between the Flea Circus and a Hamburg-and-Onion Eatery. It's had six weeks of booking in the past two years. And what were they! Special matinees of a Greek actress named Maria Koreopolous playing Sophocles' "How Are You?" in the original Greek. *That* filled a long-felt want. Then there was a movie week. A big educational film called "The Story of Evolution; or, From Ooze to Hoover," in ten reels. It then swung back to the

legitimate with a little gem entitled "Papa Love Mama." Three days. For the past six months they haven't taken the lock off the door. It's now known as the spiders' rendezvous, but you can't collect rent from *them*!

OLIVER. Well! Then it's not bringing in a cent.

CARLOTTA. So my little problem is to find somebody I can sell it to. Though I don't know what they'd do with it, unless they flood it and use it for a swimming pool. (*A sudden thought*) I wonder if I couldn't sell it back to the Stanfield estate. There's an idea. You know, when he gave me that theatre I thought it was pretty magnificent of the old boy. I wish now I'd taken a sandwich.

OLIVER. Oh, now, Lotta, you always exaggerated. I'll bet you're rolling in wealth.

CARLOTTA. What've I got? Railroads, oil, cotton. That's what they gave you in my day. I could only take what they had. You know what's happened to *those* things.

OLIVER. Well, you are down to cases. "International Beauty Returns To Stage"?

CARLOTTA. Never. I'll have my double chins in privacy. I've seen too many hardened arteries dragged out to make a first-night holiday. Though I must say I saw Julie Cavendish last night and she looked wonderful. Forty-five, if she's a day.

OLIVER. Look here, Carlotta. Your stuff must bring you in a little something. It can't cost you an awful lot to live over there.

CARLOTTA. Oh, no—but you saw what it was like in Antibes—you and Millicent. Ten and twenty for lunch—cocktails—most of them stay for dinner. And the house in London. They drop in there. Noel, and Winston, and now and then the Prince. I've really done pretty well for a little girl from Quincy, Illinois, but it runs into money. And unless you've salted down your million! Look at Lily

Langtry! Not half my looks, but she got her Edward. I picked the wrong period. Too young for Edward and too old for Wales. I fell right between princes.

OLIVER. Why don't you live over here for a while? Get a little apartment; simplify everything.

CARLOTTA. Oliver, I've been back in New York four days. It's the first time I've been back in ten years. I'm lost already. Everything's changed. I'd die here. I belong to the Delmonico period. A table by the window, facing Fifth Avenue, with the flower boxes and the pink lamp shades and the string orchestra. Oh, I don't know—willow plumes and Inverness capes, dry champagne and snow on the ground—God, they don't even have snow any more.

MISS COPELAND. (*Enters. A little timid at interrupting*) Pardon me.

OLIVER. Yes, Miss Copeland?

MISS COPELAND. (*A few steps into the room*) Mr. Eaton is on the phone. He's taking a train, and—

OLIVER. All right. I'll talk to him. Hello, Archie! (*To back of desk. In phone. MISS COPELAND is edging off L., with a lingering glance of admiration at CARLOTTA. CARLOTTA looks up from the depths of her chair with a friendly smile.*)

MISS COPELAND. (*Thus encouraged*) Oh, Miss Vance—I just want to tell you—I hope you won't mind—I can't help telling you how exciting it is seeing you right here.

OLIVER. (*At telephone*) Yes?

CARLOTTA. Sweet of you!

MISS COPELAND. I'll never forget—I saw you in "Trelawney"—oh, you were wonderful.

CARLOTTA. Oh, yes. That was the last thing I did.

OLIVER. (*Still at telephone*) I understand.

MISS COPELAND. I remember it as plainly as if it was yesterday. Though I was only a little girl at the time.

CARLOTTA. (*Smile stiffens*) How extraordinary!

MISS COPELAND. (*Backing toward L. door*) Well, I'm glad I had the chance to tell you. It's wonderful seeing you like this. (*MISS COPELAND goes out L.*)

OLIVER. (*At telephone*) That'll be Tuesday? All right. (*He hangs up. Comes front of desk. To CARLOTTA*) Sorry. You have to work occasionally, even in business. Well, see here, Lotta, I wish there was something I could do to straighten this tangle out for you. I don't think any of my friends need a theatre right now. And as far as your stocks are concerned—those things are still good. And, incidentally, so is your Jordan stock. You're not thinking of selling *that*, I hope?

CARLOTTA. I don't know. Should I?

OLIVER. Much rather you wouldn't.

CARLOTTA. But, after all, ladies must live.

OLIVER. It's like this, Carlotta. Jordan stock has never been on the market. It's held very closely. Only six or seven people in all. Of course, you've got a very small block. What did you pay for it, anyway? Remember?

CARLOTTA. Sixty-one thousand two hundred and fifty dollars.

OLIVER. (*Amused*) Carlotta, you're wonderful!

CARLOTTA. No. I remember because it's the only stock I ever paid for myself. You said it was a good thing, and it has been, too, for twenty years. Of course, in the last year or two— You wouldn't want to buy it back yourself, would you?

OLIVER. I'd like to, but it would be pretty difficult, just now.

CARLOTTA. Why, I've always thought of you as having all the money in the world.

OLIVER. I thought so, too, for a few years.

CARLOTTA. When I think of Oliver Jordan, 3d!

OLIVER. I dropped that long ago.

CARLOTTA. Oliver Jordan at twenty-one! New

York was full of gilded youths, but the gold was encrusted on *you*.

OLIVER. (*Sits on desk*) I suppose I was what they called a stage-door Johnny—though you will admit I never carried a bouquet.

CARLOTTA. You always sent me roses—those deep velvet roses, hundreds and hundreds of them. And not a pearl necklace in a carload.

OLIVER. And you let me read my plays to you, remember? I was going to be a playwright in those days—and the hell with the shipping business.

CARLOTTA. Dear Oliver, you were sweet! And so serious and respectful. I was very fond of you, Oliver.

OLIVER. I was very much in love with you, Carlotta. You were the most divine creature in the world. I was at your feet, but so was all New York. If you took supper at a restaurant, it was made. If you wore a certain hat, it became the rage.

CARLOTTA. I was rather gorgeous, wasn't I? Remember, they named everything after me—cigars, and race-horses, and perfumes, and battleships.

OLIVER. How thrilled I was the first time you went out with me. I remember waiting for you, all chills and fever, hoping everyone knew I was meeting Carlotta Vance. Supper at Martin's—"There's Carlotta Vance! There's Carlotta Vance!"—a hansom through the Park, with a moon like a silver platter. You let me kiss you, Carlotta. Remember?

CARLOTTA. Did I? One thing I'll never forget. It was the day you were twenty-one, Oliver. And you asked me to marry you.

OLIVER. What a young fool you must have thought me!

CARLOTTA. I thought it was sweet of you. Remember, I was thirtyish. I even went home and wept a little. They didn't often ask me to marry them.

OLIVER. It broke my heart when you refused me, Carlotta. I took my revenge on the theatre. None of my plays should it have! So I went back to Papa Jordan and the shipping business.

CARLOTTA. (*She looks around the office*) And here you are.

OLIVER. (*Rises*) Yes. Here I am.

MISS COPELAND. (*At L. door*) Mr. Packard is here now.

OLIVER. Oh! Yes. Send him right in. (*Turning to CARLOTTA as MISS COPELAND goes*) Do you mind? Dan Packard. Quite a fellow. Big western stuff. Used to be a miner.

CARLOTTA. I'm just going.

PACKARD. (*Voice is heard booming off before he enters*) That's no elevator—that's a bird-cage! Hey, Jordan, what kind of a dump— I beg your pardon.

(*He enters L.; stops abruptly as he sees CARLOTTA.*

MISS COPELAND, unable to precede him in his rush, has followed fussily behind. She now withdraws, closing the door. DAN PACKARD is one of those big, vital men, bellowing, self-important, too successful. His clothes are noticeable. He seems never to sit down; ramps and gesticulates as he talks, and he talks a great deal. He is always in the midst of a big deal, and curiously enough it really is a big deal. Every now and then, in his talk or in his manner, there crops up a word or gesture reminiscent of his western mining days.)

OLIVER. Lotta, this is Dan Packard. Miss Carlotta Vance.

PACKARD. (*As CARLOTTA rises and acknowledges the introduction with a nod*) Miss Vance, I—wait a minute! Vance! You don't mean Carlotta Vance.



(*He does not stop for her confirmation*) Why, I know you! Jordan, you old son of a gun!

CARLOTTA. (*To JORDAN. Grimly*) Saw me when he was a boy.

PACKARD. Why, your picture was up on the wall of every mining shack in Montana, right 'longside of John L. Sullivan. Bunch of us rode forty miles into Butte just to see you. Sutton's Opera House. What was that piece you were in? You wore pants, I remember. (*A quick glance at her present contour*) Say!

CARLOTTA. (*Hastily*) That's an exit cue. (*Starts toward L. door.*)

OLIVER. (*Following her*) When'll I see you, Lot-ta? Soon?

PACKARD. (*To R. of desk*) Don't go on my account.

CARLOTTA. I'm at the Barclay.

OLIVER. I'll call you. Look here—you're dining with us next week. Friday, isn't it?

CARLOTTA. Am I?

OLIVER. Of course you are. (*Over his shoulder, to PACKARD*) So are you, Dan. But I'll see you before that. What did you say? The Barclay?

CARLOTTA. Righto! Goodbye, Oliver. (*Then, to PACKARD*) Goodbye, Lochinvar! (*She goes out L.*)

PACKARD. What'd she call me?

OLIVER. Sit down, Dan. How've you been? (*As he crosses to his desk.*)

PACKARD. (*Taking off coat*) Only stay a minute. Running down to Washington, five-thirty. (*PACKARD puts his coat on desk*) Got to drop up home, pick up a bag. Bunch of us going down. (*Pulls chair over to desk*) I'll tell you in confidence what it's about. Seems the President wants to get right down to the bottom of things. So he asked a little crowd of us to run over. Jim Thorne, Whitaker, couple of others. Breakfast at the White House, gab



for a while, jump right back again. Not so bad. Private car, plenty of stuff, poker game.

OLIVER. That sounds grand. Dan, the reason I asked you to come in—

PACKARD. Holy smoke, I almost forgot! What time is it? (*Delves for his watch*) Mind if I use your phone? (*He is already reaching for it; receiver in hand, he turns inquiringly to OLIVER*) What kind of a—

OLIVER. Just tell my operator—she'll call you.

PACKARD. (*Into phone—on his feet*) Get me Ashland—four-six-one-seven-nine, will you, girlie? Say my secretary, Miss Brice. Snap it up! (*As he talks into the telephone his eye travels appraisingly over the room—wanders toward window*) Say, who put up this building—Peter Stuyvesant? This isn't an office; it's a museum.

OLIVER. Not exactly modernistic. But it was the last word when the old gentleman built it. (*A gesture to the portrait*) I suppose it's sentimental of me, but I don't believe I'd want to change it. Been like this for seventy-five years.

PACKARD. I hope those tubs of yours don't date with the office— (*TELEPHONE rings. PACKARD leaps to it. OLIVER rises, puts PACKARD's hat and coat from desk to chair L.*) Hello! That you, Miss Brice? I won't be in. What's that directors' meeting? Monday morning. Wait a minute. (*His quick eye sweeps the desk; he snatches a piece of paper which is an important letter; begins to make notes on it. OLIVER instinctively flings out a hand to salvage it. Too late.*) Coast State Waterways. Oh, yeh. Did you send that South American cable? Good. Did the Governor call me? Tell him I can't see him. And get me ten good seats for that Vanities show tomorrow night. And you know—I don't want to sit back of the second row. Now! I want you to send a case of Scotch, with my com-

pliments, to District Attorney Michael G. Slade, Presbyterian Hospital. Cancel my seats for the fight tonight. And get this. This is important. Call up the stables down in Maryland and tell O'Rourke I'm changing the feed on Streak-o'-Lightning. Tell him to try half bran mash from now on. *Bran mash! Mash.* That's all. (*Hangs up. Turns to OLIVER*) Now, then, Jordan, what's on your mind?

OLIVER. I'm not intruding?

PACKARD. That's all right. What's troubling you? Kind of up against it?

OLIVER. Not quite that. You probably know about our business. We're strictly freight carriers. New York and Southern Coast—Havana, Port au Prince. I needn't tell you what's happened to trade down there—sugar, coffee. Of course it isn't going to last forever. But what I want to know is, if it does take a little longer than we figure, would you be in a position—you and your associates—to sort of tide us over?

PACKARD. (*Shifts his position as he thinks this over*) H'm.

OLIVER. I realize I might have to turn over some of my holdings. I'd rather not disturb any of the other stockholders. Not many in it. Most of them have had it for years. Inherited.

PACKARD. Well, I'll tell you. Of course I don't know anything about your business, but it looks to me as if it's gone to seed. Only have to look around this office. All those old fogies out there. As far as that Southern trade's concerned, I don't see much future in it. Tell you the truth, Jordan, I don't think you've got much to offer.

OLIVER. (*With some indignation*) Just a minute, Packard! You know nothing about my business. The Jordan Line is one of the best known in the shipping world. Our boats have traveled the ocean for a century. We started with clipper ships. And

we're not going to stop now. We're not through—not by a damn sight!

PACKARD. Gosh, Jordan, I didn't mean anything. You know—I'm a business man—I may have put it a little—you know how it is these days—everybody after you—I apologize.

OLIVER. (*His hand absently rubbing his chest, as though to still a discomfort there*) That's all right. (*WARN Dim Out.*)

PACKARD. Tell you what I'll do. You get together some figures on this thing. Can you do that?

OLIVER. Why—I could.

PACKARD. Balance sheet, assets—total tonnage, and when the boats were built—list of stockholders—not many of them, you said?

OLIVER. No, no. It's held quite closely.

PACKARD. Well, let me have a list of them. Now, when do you want to send this to me?

OLIVER. Oh—it won't take long. You understand, Packard, this is confidential.

PACKARD. Sure! Sure!

OLIVER. Another thing. We've got a stockholders' meeting on the twenty-sixth. That's a week from Monday.

PACKARD. You give me that dope early next week, and I'll let you have an answer in a few days.

OLIVER. That's very kind of you. (*Again the vague rubbing of the chest.*)

PACKARD. What's the matter there—got a pain? (*Imitating JORDAN'S gesture.*)

OLIVER. No, no. Little indigestion.

PACKARD. Juice of half a lemon—I get it all the time—half a lemon in hot water. (*A hasty glance at his watch. Has hat and coat from chair*) Jumping Jupiter! I've got to travel. You'll send me that stuff? Do what I can for you, anyway. God knows!

OLIVER. Thanks. (*PACKARD goes. OLIVER stands*

*a moment in front of the desk. His hand passes once more over his chest, absently. Then, slowly, he starts to walk around to his chair. As PACKARD slams the door—)*

## THE LIGHTS DIM OUT.

### ACT ONE

#### SCENE III

KITTY PACKARD'S bedroom in the PACKARDS' apartment. It is a rather startling room, done in the modernistic manner by the newest and most fashionable modern decorator. The color is white—all the shades of white from cream, through ivory to oyster. KITTY has just had it done, and finds she doesn't like it very well. It isn't, she thinks, becoming to her.

There is a large and luxurious bed in the upper Left corner of the room, a dressing table down R. bearing bottles, brushes, mirrors, jars; a bedside table, a modernistic upholstered chair. There are two doors, one leading into DAN PACKARD'S room, down L., the other into the hall, up R.

It is half-past four in the afternoon. KITTY PACKARD is in bed. She has been in bed all day. A pretty woman of 29, the slightly faded wild-rose, Irish type. She was KITTY SHEEHAN before her marriage. There is, in her face, the petulance of the idle and empty-headed wife. She is sitting up among her pillows and is wearing a charming bed-jacket over her nightgown. Her hair is arranged as carefully as though for a more formal occasion. All about her, on the

*bed, on the table, and even on the floor, are the odds and ends that have accumulated for her amusement during the long day. On the bed are a puzzle game in a pasteboard box, a nail buffer, a hand mirror, and a movie magazine. On the bed table is a movie magazine, on top of which is a large candy box, which, in turn, supports a tray on which are a chocolate pot, cup, saucer and spoon, cream pitcher, sugar bowl and a small bowl of whipped cream. A powder jar and puff are also on the table. Strewn around the bed, on the floor and on the dais, are three movie magazines, one of which is open, and two brightly bound detective story novels, one of which lies open. Under the bed, unseen, is a large and imposing volume. On the dais, leaning against the foot of the bed, is a Pierrot doll. Near it is a tabloid newspaper. Another doll, a Pierrette, is in the chair Center, and a third doll reclines on the dressing table bench. Over this doll is carelessly thrown a feathery bed jacket. On the dressing table are a clock, an elaborate case of toilet articles, a cigarette box, an atomizer, a hairbrush, a mascara box, a powder jar and puff, a comb, and a jewel case, open, in which are a rope of pearls and a number of jeweled bracelets. All of the dressing table fittings are in white, or black and white.*

*At the rise of the Curtain, KITTY is to be seen working over the puzzle held balanced in her hands. Her whole attention is concentrated on it. She fails to make it come right, tosses it aside pettishly, looks about for amusement, takes up a motion picture magazine, flips its pages idly, throws that aside.*

KITTY. (*Calls*) Tina! Tina! (*TINA enters from the hall R. TINA is MRS. PACKARD'S personal maid.*

*A somewhat hard-faced, capable and shifty girl of twenty-five or six. She is wearing a smart maid's uniform.)*

TINA. Yes, Mrs. Packard? *(Crosses to her.)*

KITTY. What time is it now?

TINA. *(Glances at clock on dressing table)* Half past four.

KITTY. What did Doctor Talbot say? What time's he coming?

TINA. He didn't say exactly. He asked were there any symptoms, and I said, no, I didn't think so, so he said all right then, some time this afternoon.

KITTY. *(Annoyed)* I've got a cold and my legs ache all over.

TINA. Oh—well—you didn't tell me to say that, Mrs. Packard.

KITTY. Well, you should have known it! What'll I do from now until— Where'd that puzzle get to? *(Her eye travels about the bed and bedside; falls on the chocolate tray)* Oh, take that all away. Wait a minute! *(Reaches swiftly for the spoon, dips it into the whipped cream, licks it with a lingering tongue. TINA picks up the tray. Goes to R. door.)* Get me that other candy box—the big one. *(Looks about at her assortment of pastimes. A deep sigh. Picks up the discarded puzzle, and again tries to concentrate on this.)*

TINA. *(Returns with the candy box, an enormous affair of pink satin and gold lace. She comes up the bedside, stands, box in hand, watching a moment to see if MRS. PACKARD is really going to perform the trick this time. After an absorbed second)* If you tip it up this way—*(A gesture with her hand)*—you can get the blue in.

KITTY. *(Throws the puzzle across the room)* Oh! *(TINA hastily places the candy box on the bed, goes to retrieve the puzzle, puts it on bed table, straight-*



*ens things on table. KITTY turns over on her side; her glance encounters the candy box; she opens it and begins greedily to inspect its contents. Selects a chocolate, begins to nibble it. Nibbling the chocolate, her eye roaming the room*) I don't like this room. It's all done, and I don't like it. Do you?

TINA. (*Gazing about*) I don't understand it. Is it finished?

KITTY. I think I'll have 'em do it again, not modernistic.

TINA. I liked it the old way, with the pink satin.

KITTY. Yeah, that's what I'll do. I'll change it back again— Was the dog out?

TINA. I don't know for sure.

KITTY. Well, find out, and have John take him. (*As TINA exits R.*) He's got to have his walk. (*Left to her own devices, KITTY picks up buffer, starts to polish her nails, tires of it, picks up a largish hand-mirror and surveys herself in it, tipping it at various angles, peering at a tiny blemish on her skin, smoothing her eyebrows, widening her eyes, and performing like antics to which women are given when alone with a mirror. Takes a large fluffy powder puff from the bedside table; pats her face with it.*)

TINA. (*Returns with a very gay hatbox ornamented with a brilliant bow*) Your hat's come.

KITTY. Ooh!

TINA. And Mr. Packard's just come in.

KITTY. Give it here. (*Sits up eagerly. Between them she and TINA open the box. The hat emerges, a modish winter thing with an ornament and a little nose-veil*) Looks cute, doesn't it?

TINA. Mm.

KITTY. (*Hands TINA the mirror*) Here! Hold this! (*Adjusts the hat to her head. Peers at the effect in the mirror held by TINA*) No; higher. There! No—let me have it. (*Takes the mirror, holds it herself, still looking at her reflection in the*



glass. *TINA steps back a few paces, the better to see. The booming of DAN PACKARD'S voice is heard down the hall as he approaches.*)

PACKARD. (*Entering R. He is in topcoat and is wearing his hat*) Oh, hello— You in bed again? What's the matter?

KITTY. I don't feel good. (*TINA goes out R.*)

PACKARD. (*Notes her hat*) What's the idea of the hat? Going out? (*Has been making straight for the closed door of his own bedroom L. Opens the door. Shouts*) Hey! John! You know what I want. Just overnight.

VOICE. (*Off*) Yes, Mr. Packard.

PACKARD. (*Glances at watch. To KITTY*) Got to get right out. (*Throws hat and coat on bed*) Why don't you get up! Do something!

KITTY. You don't care what I do.

PACKARD. (*As the scene progresses he takes off his hat and coat, which he tosses onto the bed; looks at himself in her dressing table mirror to see if he needs a shave; unfastens his tie; vanishes into his own room for a second; emerges with a tie of another color*) Look at me! Never sick a day in my life. And why! I get out, and do things, keep going. Hey, John! I don't want any dinner clothes. (*Again to her*) That's the reason.

KITTY. (*Looking at herself in the mirror*) That's because you're an extravert and I'm an introvert.

PACKARD. A what?

KITTY. Doctor Talbot says you're an extravert and I'm an introvert, and that's why I have to be quiet a good deal and have time to reflect in.

PACKARD. Reflect in! What have you got to reflect about? I've got to think and act at the same time! Do you know why I'm going to Washington tonight? Because the President wants to consult me about the affairs of the Nation! That's why!

KITTY. What's the matter with them?

PACKARD. Everything's the matter with them! That's why he's sending for me! And I'll tell you something else, if you want to know. It wouldn't surprise me a bit if he offered me a Cabinet job, and what do you know about that?

KITTY. (*Busy with her own thoughts*) Where'd that buffer get to?

PACKARD. (*Goes off L.*) You ought to be married to some of the guys that I see. That'd give you something to reflect about. (*He comes on*) Why, I went into an office this afternoon—fellow begging me to—and it turns out he can't even keep a little bit of a business going! I juggle fifty things and he can't handle one! And—(*He goes off L.; reappears immediately*)—here's the blow-off! I've been trying to get hold of just his kind of layout for the last two years, and the damn fool hands it to me! Only he don't know it. (*Disappears*) I give him a song and dance—he's sending me a full list of stockholders—I buy up what I need—and it's all over but the shouting! (*He returns*) Little Dan Packard owns the best shipping line between here and the Tropics, and Mr. Oliver Jordan is out on his ear.

KITTY. (*Bringing that fine mind of hers to bear*) We're going there for dinner next Friday, and I'm going to wear my new pink.

PACKARD. We are what?

KITTY. Mrs. Oliver Jordan called me up, and they're giving a swell dinner, and we're invited.

PACKARD. (*Putting on tie*) Oh, that's what he was driving— We're not going.

KITTY. The hell we ain't! Why not?

PACKARD. I can't go and eat his dinner! If he's a sucker, that's his funeral. Business is business, but I can't go walking into his house!

KITTY. No! Presidents and Washington, and all those rummies, but you can't go anywheres with me! Once in our life we get asked to a classy house,

and I've got a new dress that'll knock their eye out, and we're going!

PACKARD. We are *not* going!

KITTY. (*Now on her knees in the bed, the hat still on her head. In high rage*) We are so! You big crook, you pull a dirty deal and it ruins my social chances! Well, you can't get away with it!

PACKARD. Oh, go lay down! You tell me what I can do! Well, we're not going, and that's all there is to it. (*Exits L.*) Come on, now, John—snap into it!

KITTY. (*Still on her knees, expresses her hatred for the absent DAN with a series of hideous and unadult facial contortions, reminiscent of her past. That finished with, she realizes that she needs a new method of attack. She sinks back among her pillows, taking the hat off as she does so; draws up the covers very thoughtfully, and arrives at her plan of campaign*) Dan-ny! (*A honeyed voice*) Danny! Ple-ase! Kitty wants to go. Kitty wants to see all the dreat bid—(*She is now in baby talk of the most revolting kind*)—lords and ladies in the big booful house. (*No sound from the other room. The baby talk is followed by a dirty look*) Danny! It's for Lord Ferncliffe and Lady Ferncliffe. Danny!

PACKARD. (*His head through the L. doorway; his gaze very intent on her*) What did you say?

KITTY. It's for Lord and Lady Ferncliffe, from England.

PACKARD. (*Emerging*) Who says so?

KITTY. She did.

PACKARD. Why the hell didn't you tell me in the first place?

KITTY. Because you were mean to poor little Kitty.

PACKARD. Ferncliffe? You know who he is, don't you? He's one of the richest men in England.

KITTY. Oh, goody! Then you'll go?

PACKARD. Why—I've been trying to meet him for years.

KITTY. See? And Kitty did it for you.

PACKARD. Ferncliffe, eh? Well, I'm not going to miss him, Jordan or no Jor— Do you know what I'll do? (*Thinking it out swiftly as he talks*) I'll buy up that Jordan stock through dummies. I'll use Baldridge and Whitestone—fellows like that. Keep my name out of it.

KITTY. Out of what?

PACKARD. Oh, for God's—

TINA. (*Enters R.*) Doctor Talbot's come.

KITTY. Doctor Talbot? Good!

PACKARD. (*Grabs his hat and coat; a quick "good-bye"*) He'll fix you up all right! Ferncliffe! God, what a break! Bye, Kitten! See you tomorrow. Stick that in the car, John! S'long, Kitten. (*He is gone off R.*)

KITTY. (*Through PACKARD'S speech, chiming in on "Bye, Kitten"*) Goodbye! Goodbye! Yes, that's fine! Goodbye! (*She barely gives DAN time to get out of the room*) Tina! Quick! Get me the other bed-jacket. (*As TINA goes to the dressing table KITTY slips off her bed-jacket and hurls it across the bed, holding out her arms for the new one*) Get me my pearls out of the case! Don't let him come in till I tell you. Clear the things off the bed! Fix it up a little! (*Mirror in hand, KITTY plies powder puff, lipstick and comb*) Give me that book! The big one!

TINA. (*With a wild look around*) Where is it?

KITTY. Look around! It fell down! (*TINA drops to her hands and knees and begins looking around the bed*) Hurry up! It's there some place!

TINA. (*Bringing up a brightly bound detective story*) Is this it?

KITTY. No, no! That Dr. Talbot gave me! It's a big thick one and it says, "Aspects of the Adult

Mind." (*She manages the two-syllable words with difficulty.*)

TINA. (*Fishing under the bed*) I got it!

KITTY. Give it to me!

TINA. (*Her lips move silently for a second as she reassures herself about the title*) Yeah, this is it!  
(*WARN Dim Out.*)

KITTY. (*Taking the book*) All right now! (*She dismisses TINA with a wave of the hand. TINA gathers up candy boxes, kicks a magazine under the bed, scurries out R. A final preening on KITTY's part—a patting of the pillow. She opens the book at random, but decides that she really ought to be further along than that. She slaps over another hundred pages; then, inserting a finger as though to mark her place, she closes the book. She is very much the invalid, interrupted while reading, as the DOCTOR enters. DR. TALBOT is happy in the possession of a good figure, a conventionally handsome face, a dark neat mustache, a reassuring bedside manner. Perhaps forty-six. TINA has followed him into the room.*)

TALBOT. (*His is a quiet, soothing voice*) Well! Hello! What's all this?

KITTY. (*Suddenly weak*) Hello, Doctor! (*TINA crosses to L.; closes door.*)

TALBOT. Just ran into your husband downstairs. Tells me he's going to see the President.

KITTY. Yes, he's going to help him fix things. (*TINA picks up magazines from the bed.*)

TALBOT. (*Seats himself on the side of the bed. A finger on her pulse*) Well! What's the trouble with the little lady?

KITTY. Well, Doctor, I don't know. I kind of ached all over, and felt funny, and you've got to be so careful about flu—(*TINA exits R.*)—and I thought maybe if I stayed in bed— (*The door closes behind TINA. As she departs, KITTY's voice trails*

*off into nothingness. She is listening intently, as she talks, for the sound of TINA'S retreating footsteps. DR. TALBOT'S finger is still on her pulse.)* You don't ever come unless I send for you.

TALBOT. I'm very busy, Kitty. You know how busy I am.

KITTY. But I'm so lonely, Wayne. And you know how I need you. *(Her arms go about his neck. A trifle reluctantly, he responds to her embrace.)*

THE LIGHTS DIM OUT QUICKLY.

## ACT ONE

### SCENE IV

*The JORDAN sitting room. Late afternoon of the same day. A tea table, with a lace cloth, stands before the chair c. The Venetian blinds are half raised. Otherwise the room is as before. Three shaded lamps are lighted. DORA is lighting the lamp L. of table as the scene begins. Takes a last look around to see that everything is in order. Satisfied that it is, she goes off L.*

*Immediately GUSTAVE enters R. Over one arm he carries, neatly folded, a pair of newly pressed trousers, from which dangles a pair of suspenders. As he enters he peers toward the bedroom, having caught a vanishing glimpse of DORA.*

GUSTAVE. *(Enters as DORA exits)* Psst! *(She does not hear him. He puts trousers on back of chair c.; goes to L. door)* Psst!

DORA. *(Enters; comes to GUSTAVE)* Darling!



GUSTAVE. My little princess! (*A long embrace and a kiss.*)

DORA. You ought to be downstairs. She'll be home to tea any minute.

GUSTAVE. There is yet time. (*Kisses her again. Withdraws a little, so that she is very near as she now talks to him.*)

DORA. Oh, Gustave, I only feel safe when I am with you like this. That Ricci!

GUSTAVE. Has he been bothering you again—that snake!

DORA. He tries to grab hold of me. And he says things, in Italian—like this— (*She hisses these last two words*) I don't know what they mean.

GUSTAVE. How could you ever like him, that *flugter hund*!

DORA. I didn't. Besides, that was before you came here.

GUSTAVE. Ma petite! (*He tries to draw her to him. This time she repulses him definitely.*)

DORA. No, no. I'm not going to kiss you any more.

GUSTAVE. Not going to kiss me! What have I done?

DORA. (*Tidying herself, primly*) Nothing. Only why should I let you kiss me? We're not engaged or anything.

GUSTAVE. What are you saying? You know I am mad for you! All night long I cannot sleep! My Dora! (*Another gesture towards her*) I love you! Why are you so cold to me? At night why do you lock your door, always? You know how much I love you!

DORA. (*In a panic*) No, no, Gustave! No! (*Pulls herself together a little*) I couldn't be like that! I couldn't!

GUSTAVE. You do not love me!

DORA. I do! I do! But—you come from Europe.

You don't understand. I was brought up strict. If anybody loves me like that they would want me to marry them.

GUSTAVE. Marry! Oh, but Dora! To marry takes so much money. I have been here in America only a year.

DORA. (*Almost crying*) You don't want to marry me!

GUSTAVE. I love you! I love you!

DORA. (*Breaking in on his speech*) You don't love me! You were only fooling with me! You're as bad as Ricci! I hate you! I'm going away, that's what I'm going to do! I'll get another place and you'll never see me again! I hate you! (*A WHISTLE from down the hall, followed by PAULA'S voice, calling. GUSTAVE snatches trousers from chair, hangs them over his arm.*)

PAULA. (*From the hall*) That you, Mother? (*PAULA enters R.*) Oh, I thought I heard— Mother isn't home yet, huh?

GUSTAVE. Not yet, Miss Paula. I believe she'll be in soon.

PAULA. Oh! Tell her I'm home. (*Goes off R. to her room down the hall whistling a fragment of a popular tune. The sound of her whistling dies away.*)

GUSTAVE. Dora, don't talk like that! I will do anything for you. I have never been like this—never!

DORA. If you loved me you would marry me. Goodbye. (*Turns to go R.*)

GUSTAVE. Wait. (*She halts.*) I will marry you.

DORA. (*In joyful unbelief*) Gustave! When?

GUSTAVE. (*Evasively*) Ah. Soon.

DORA. But when?

GUSTAVE. Well—when we can.

DORA. Thursday! We'll both be off.

PAULA. (*Heard off, from her bedroom down the hall*) Gustave!

GUSTAVE. (*A move toward R. door*) Yes, Miss Paula. (*Pulling himself together.*)

PAULA. (*Still heard in the distance*) I wonder if I could have a cup of hot tea in my room?

GUSTAVE. Very good, Miss Paula. (*In a cautious undertone to DORA*) But, remember—no word of this. It must be a secret.

DORA. (*Very low*) All right. And we won't tell Ricci. He might do something.

GUSTAVE. (*A whisper*) That's right. Only us.

DORA. Thursday. (*A fond gesture in DORA's direction. GUSTAVE goes out R. With GUSTAVE's departure a little look of triumph comes over her face. She has achieved what she wanted. She stands for a moment in contemplation of her victory, her pleasure visibly mounting. Humming a bit of gay song, she trips into the bedroom L., highly pleased with herself. The voices of OLIVER and RICCI are heard approaching down the hall.*)

RICCI. I would stop here and rest if I were you, sir.

OLIVER. I'd rather go to my bedroom.

RICCI. I'd sit here for just a minute and get your breath. (*OLIVER and RICCI enter R. OLIVER is being half-supported by RICCI, and seems to be breathing with a little difficulty. He sinks on sofa. Obviously he is not well. RICCI behind sofa*) Here we are, sir. I'll see if Mrs. Jordan— (*Looks toward L. door.*)

OLIVER. (*Rising, hastily*) No, no, no! Mrs. Jordan mustn't— (*The quick movement of rising has been too much. Gasping a little, he sinks back into sofa. RICCI returns quickly to his L. side. As OLIVER sits, DORA appears in L. doorway, drawn by the men's voices. Comes forward in some alarm.*)

DORA. What's the matter! Mr. Jordan!

OLIVER. I'm all right. I'm all right.

DORA. Anything I can do, sir? What should I get? *(To RICCI)* What's the matter with him?

RICCI. You must not get up, sir. You should lie back. The head down. *(To DORA)* Has Mrs. Jordan come in?

DORA. No, she hasn't. What should we do?

OLIVER. *(Rising again, but cautiously)* Not so much fuss. Please! *(With an effort, pulls himself together)* I'm quite all right. I'm going to my own room. *(RICCI attempts again to assist him)* What happened, Ricci?

RICCI. You were stepping out of the car, sir. You—you stumbled.

OLIVER. That's—funny. I didn't—fall? H'm?

RICCI. No, no. I caught you. You did not— No, no, sir.

OLIVER. *(Thoughtfully)* I'm much obliged to you, Ricci. Remember, both of you. Nothing about this to Mrs. Jordan. *(Goes out R.)*

DORA. Do you think he's all right?

RICCI. *(Goes to R. door, looks after the retreating figure. Turns)* Sure. He's all right. *(Comes toward DORA. His whole attention suddenly concentrating ominously on her.)*

DORA. You keep away from me, Tony Ricci! *(Backs away from him.)*

RICCI. My little darling Dora, why are you frightened of me? Why do you always run away from me? Tell me, my pretty little Dora. Why? Him? *(With a swift movement he seizes her wrist in a tight grip.)*

DORA. *(Tries to free herself)* Let me go!

RICCI. *(Pulls her closer to him. Holds her in a vise)* Listen to me! You were sweet enough to me before he came here. And you think now you can spit on me for that Alsatian pig!

DORA. (*Breaking in*) You crazy fool! Let me go! (*Vainly pulls and tugs away from him.*)

RICCI. (*Again pulls her closer to him*) I show you who is the pig.

DORA. You let me go! I'll scream!

RICCI. Oh, no, you won't. (*A glance over his shoulder at R. door. DORA begins to pound his chest with her free fist. RICCI twists the wrist he is holding. DORA opens her mouth to scream. RICCI claps a hand over her mouth. In a flash she twists loose and sinks her teeth in his hand. With a curse he frees his other hand and deals her a hard, vicious slap in the face. RICCI turns and goes out R. quickly. DORA has staggered a little under the blow, crouched a little, her hand to her face. Stands, a bundle of fear and misery, whimpering a little. The voices of MILLICENT and HATTIE are heard from the hallway.*)

MILLICENT. (*Off*) Oh, well, come in long enough to have a cup of tea. I'll send you home with Ricci.

HATTIE. I ought to be home now. (*DORA, hearing their voices, arranges her attire, smooths her hair. Darts to the table up c. Fusses with the books and magazines.*)

MILLICENT. (*Entering R. She is in street attire, as is HATTIE, who follows her in. MILLICENT crosses straight to her bedroom L., which she enters, talking as she goes*) Nonsense. Cup of tea'll be good for you. I'll die if I don't have one in a minute. (*In a higher pitch, from the bedroom*) There's nothing in the world wears me out like shopping. I hate it.

HATTIE. Hello, Dora.

DORA. Good afternoon, Mrs. Loomis. (*Her hand on the injured cheek.*)

HATTIE. What's the matter—neuralgia?

DORA. (*A nod and a gulp*) Yes, madam. (*She gets out R. as quickly as possible.*)

MILLCENT. (*From the bedroom*) Well, this settles it. I am not going to kill myself for Paula. If she doesn't care enough to come along she can be married like a shop-girl for all of me. (GUSTAVE enters R., bringing the tea things. He arranges them on the table.)

HATTIE. Remember that lovely trousseau poor Mama got for me? All lace and embroidery?

MILLCENT. (*Still in the next room*) You've probably still got it. I know you.

HATTIE. Those fifteen-foot tablecloths? I sold them to Ringling Brothers for a tent.

MILLCENT. (*Hearing the clink of china*) Is that the tea? I'll be right in.

HATTIE. (*Sauntering over to the table and peering into a sandwich*) M'm. What's this, Gustave? (*Pours tea.*)

GUSTAVE. I believe that's watercress, madame. With mayonnaise. (*Starts to go R.*)

MILLCENT. (*Entering. Has taken off her hat and furs*) I am simply dead. Maybe this'll pick me up. Any messages, Gustave? (*Taking cup of tea which HATTIE has poured.*)

GUSTAVE. Oh—yes, madam. —Mr. Townsend regrets very much that he cannot come to dinner on Friday, the twenty-third. He will be out of town.

MILLCENT. Oh, damn!

GUSTAVE. (*Very quietly*) Yes, madam. (*Goes out R.*)

MILLCENT. (*Crosses to desk. Sits*) Well, I've got to begin all over again. I'll bet if I called one man this morning, I called ten. Would you believe it? There just isn't an extra man in all New York?

HATTIE. (*Sits at table*) I never could understand why it has to be just even—male and female. They're invited for dinner, not for mating.

MILLCENT. Don't be bohemian, Hattie. I've got



to have a balanced table. (*Indicating a list on the desk*) Now, there are the good ones. I've tried them all.

HATTIE. I know. It's like one of those boxes of candy. You begin with those luscious chocolate creams and at the finish you're down to candied violets and spit-backs. What becomes of all the men, anyhow? You see men on the street. Do they set them out in the morning and take them in at night?

MILLICENT. Well, I don't know what I'm going to do. There just isn't anybody, that's all. (*Takes cup back to tea table. Returns to desk. Sits.*)

HATTIE. Why don't you try a little new blood? They don't have to be those same old set pieces. Don't you know any prize-fighters or politicians or playwrights? Get somebody that'll go with Carlotta. Give *her* a little fun. Get an actor, or something.

MILLICENT. (*Thoughtfully*) An actor. Of course it would have to be one that's not acting. Let me see.

HATTIE. A *movie* star! Aren't there any movie stars around?

MILLICENT. (*Snaps her fingers in triumph*) Larry Renault! He'd be marvelous. I wonder if he's still in town.

HATTIE. He was yesterday.

MILLICENT. How do you know?

HATTIE. Ed. Ed, the movie-hound. Read me an interview with him in last night's *Telegram*. He's leaving pictures and going into a play.

MILLICENT. I wonder where he's stopping. Did it say?

HATTIE. (*A great effort of memory*) Yes, it did. Let me see. It's one of those hotels in the Fifties—they all stop at it. Now, just—it'll come to me—

MILLICENT. (*Busy with her own thoughts, while HATTIE is recollecting*) You know, he knows Car-

lotta. We met him three years ago, in Antibes. He was simply a sensation. He'd just made that big picture—Sins of something—and he was absolutely mobbed wherever he went. The Casino crowds just gaping, and the girls fighting to get into his car. And on the beach! I must say I never saw such a figure. He wore even less than the girls.

HATTIE. Ed doesn't like him since the talkies. He says he seems different. You can't fool Ed about the movies. He remembers Flora Finch, and Mae Marsh, and Henry B. Walthall—

MILLICENT. Of course, I don't even know if he'd know me now. We met at a dozen dinners. I wonder who'd know where he's stopping.

HATTIE. (*Suddenly*) Versailles! That's it. Hotel Versailles.

MILLICENT. (*Reaches for the telephone book*) Oh, good! Are you sure?

HATTIE. Yes, I remember the whole interview. He was wearing a black moire lounging robe with a white monogram.

MILLICENT. (*Hunting the number*) I don't suppose people like that are ever home.

HATTIE. What's the name of that play he's going to be in?

MILLICENT. (*One finger marking her place, she looks up at HATTIE*) I'll put him next to Carlotta, and then give her Doctor Talbot on the other side—let's see—next to Doctor Talbot—the Packard woman—h'm—Talbot and the Packard woman—no, they'd never get on together.

HATTIE. See if you can get him first and let nature take its course.

MILLICENT. (*Consulting the book again*) Plaza—three— (*Scribbles the number on her note pad; starts to dial.*)

HATTIE. (*Jumping up; pulling on her gloves*)

Well, I make you a present of it, darling. At least that's one trouble I haven't got. Three rooms and a kitchenette eliminates the extra-man problem.

PAULA. (*Enters R.*) Hello, Aunt Hattie. I didn't know you were here.

HATTIE. Hello, Paula. Pour you a cup of tea?

PAULA. I had some in my room. I've been sleeping.

MILLICENT. (*Has finished dialing; the receiver to her ear*) I thought you were at the office. That tea for Chanel.

PAULA. (*Nibbling a sandwich*) Oh, she was an awful bust. She wore pearls with a sport suit—ropes of 'em.

MILLICENT. (*Into the phone*) Hotel Versailles? (*The word catches PAULA'S attention*) Is Mr. Larry Renault stopping there?

PAULA. (*A little startled*) Who?

MILLICENT. Larry Renault. *You* know, the movie actor. I'm giving a dinner and I thought it'd be fun if he came.

HATTIE. See you soon, Millie. I've got to be going.

MILLICENT. (*Carelessly*) Oh, don't be in a hurry.

HATTIE. Yes; got to. Ed's sort of an old-fashioned husband. He thinks wives ought to be home before dinner. (*Goes out R.*)

MILLICENT. (*At the telephone*) Hello! I'm waiting for Mr. Larry Renault. (*GUSTAVE enters with the evening paper, which he places on table up c.*)

PAULA. How did you happen to think of him?

MILLICENT. (*Turns*) What? Oh, Gustave, has Mr. Jordan come in yet? He's late, isn't he?

GUSTAVE. He's been in quite some time, madam. He's in his room. (*WARN Curtain.*)

MILLICENT. Really! Does he know I'm home?

GUSTAVE. I'm not sure, madam. I believe he's

lying down. I understand he has a slight headache.

MILLICENT. Oh—I didn't know. Tell him I'll be right in. (*Into the phone as GUSTAVE departs*) Hello! Can't you get— Is this Mr. Renault? Mr. Renault, this is Mrs. Oliver Jordan. I don't know if you remember me— Yes! Antibes! Why, you're wonderful! Mr. Renault, I'd like it so much if you could come to a little dinner I'm giving a week from tonight. Just a tiny dinner. Lord and Lady Ferncliffe are coming, and Carlotta Vance—of course, you know Carlotta— Well, that's so nice. Friday, the twenty-third, at eight o'clock—that's right. What? My daughter? Well, *what* a memory! (*To PAULA*) He remembers you, Paula. (*Into phone*) She's right here, and very flattered. Oh, no, she won't be at the dinner. She isn't invited. But she's quite grown up now. Wait a minute. Won't you say hello to her? I know she'd be thrilled to death. (*To PAULA*) Here, Paula—go ahead. Don't be silly. (*Turns the receiver over to PAULA.*)

PAULA. (*Reluctantly takes the receiver*) Hello! Yes, this is Paula Jordan. Indeed I do. Well, people don't forget *you*, do they? Now, you're just being whimsical, Mr. Renault.

MILLICENT. (*As she flutters off R. In a loud whisper*) Be nice to him. I want to see how Dad is.

PAULA. (*Telephone*) Oh, no, I'm not.

MILLICENT. (*As she goes into the hallway*) Oliver, I didn't know you weren't feeling well. (*Exits R.*)

PAULA. (*Very intense. Into the telephone*) You're insane! You can't come here. No, she's gone. No, I can't. I tell you I can't tonight. I've got to go out with Ernest. No, it won't work again. He's furious about last night. Larry, you've been drinking. Listen, I'll call you later on another phone. Of course I love you. Of course. Goodbye.

*(The Curtain starts to descend. Hangs up quickly. Takes a darting look to see if anyone could have been within earshot. Sits a little huddled figure in the chair at desk.)*

THE CURTAIN FALLS.

## ACT TWO

### SCENE I

*A week later.*

LARRY RENAULT'S apartment in the Hotel Versailles. It is a rather smart hotel in the East Fifties, of the type patronized by successful actors and motion picture people. Its style of furnishing is modern French in excellent taste. The employes' uniforms are very chic, and a shade too spectacular.

*The room which we see is the sitting room. It is bright, tastefully arranged, comfortable. A door at the Left leads into a bedroom, unseen. At the back there is a fireplace, furnished with gas logs. On either side of the fireplace are narrow French windows leading to minute twin balconies. There is a second door at the Right, which leads to the outer corridor.*

*There is a low armchair below the door Right, and a small desk and chair above it. On the desk, prominently displayed, is a photograph of PAULA JORDAN, this in a heavy silver frame. Beside it, in a larger leather frame, is a photograph of RENAULT himself in one of his favorite (and more youthful) poses. There is a large, comfortable chair R. of Center, with a bridge lamp above it. Up Right, at right angles to the footlights, is a commode on which there*



*is a lamp; above it is a mirror. Opposite, at Left, is another commode and lamp with a picture above. There is a small couch down Left, with detachable cushions and two pillows; an end table beside it on which is a telephone, an empty whiskey bottle and a glass. There is a large rug in the Center of the room, and small throw rugs at each door.*

*There is no one on the stage at the rise of the Curtain. The sound of the BUZZER at the outer door off R. is heard. A slight pause. LARRY RENAULT enters from the bedroom.*

*He is a handsome man in his early forties, with the perfect profile that so gracefully lends itself to a successful motion picture career. His figure still passes, but about the whole man there are the unmistakable marks of middle-age, abetted by pretty steady drinking, increasing failure, and disappointment. It is a vain and weak face, but not unappealing. He is wearing the black moire dressing gown mentioned by HATTIE. The initials "L.R." in white form an impressive monogram on the left side. A white silk shirt with a soft collar, dark trousers and black patent-leather lounging slippers complete his costume. He is slightly unshaven, as he means to shave before dressing to go out to dinner. It is now about four o'clock in the afternoon. As he crosses room the BUZZER sounds for the second time. As he opens the R. door EDDIE, the bellboy, steps into the room. He is carrying a bottle of whiskey rather carelessly wrapped.*

LARRY. Oh, it's you— Where've you been so long?

EDDIE. *(Gives him the bottle)* Come as quick as I could. *(Turns to go.)*

LARRY. Hey! Wait a minute! (*Boy stops.*) Where's my change?

EDDIE. Had to go to a new place. Cost half a dollar more.

LARRY. Who told you to go to a new place? (*The Boy has not stopped. He is out the door before LARRY's last word is finished. The door slams behind him. LARRY stands looking after him for a second, then heads for the couch, unwrapping the bottle as he crosses. Takes paper off bottle, throws empty bottle from table into waste-basket, opens bottle, and starts to pour drink. The PHONE rings. The bottle still in hand, he answers the phone*) Hello— (*A bit eagerly, as he recognizes the voice*) Oh, hello, Max— Yeah, I'll be here. Why?—Can't you tell me over the phone?—All right—I'll be waiting for you. (*Hangs up; takes up drink. BUZZER sounds. An annoyed glance, then puts the bottle on the table and goes to the R. door. It is PAULA JORDAN who enters. There is about her the unnatural vivacity of one who has secret and important news.*) Paula!

PAULA. Mr. Renault! (*Whirls into the room*) Not Mr. Larry Renault! Not the great motion picture actor! (*Runs to him. Is in his arms. They kiss.*)

LARRY. Crazy little darling!

PAULA. (*Not stopping*) How've you been and how are you and I want to know how you are! And do you love me?

LARRY. You know I do! (*They kiss.*)

PAULA. Well, I just thought I'd ask. (*Throws muff and fur piece on chair as she crosses L. Takes off hat; throws it on couch.*)

LARRY. What's happened to you? Why all the animal spirits?

PAULA. Oh, nothing. Just girlish vivacity. *And* hunger.

LARRY. Hunger!

PAULA. Would you give a girl a cup of coffee? Nothing else.

LARRY. Of course. (*Reaches for the phone*) What's the matter? Didn't you have any lunch?

PAULA. Well—I had a sort of liquid lunch.

LARRY. (*In phone*) Room service, please. (*Turns to her*) Did you say coffee? Don't you mean tea?

PAULA. I do not mean tea.

LARRY. Well, if you— (*Then into phone*) Room service? This is Mr. Renault, in Nineteen Hundred. Will you send up a pot of coffee, please? (*Turning to PAULA*) Anything else?

PAULA. Toast.

LARRY. (*In phone*) Toast. (*To PAULA*) Buttered?

PAULA. (*Sits on couch*) Buttered.

LARRY. (*In phone*) Buttered. That's all. Right away, please. (*Hangs up; sits R. of her*) Now, what's got into you?

PAULA. I had lunch in a speakeasy. I had lunch in a speakeasy with Ernest. I had three double Martini cocktails and Ernest had double lamp chop with spinach a dollar fifty.

LARRY. That sounds like a quarrel.

PAULA. Well—yes. You can get pretty nasty on spinach. Larry, I can't face him again, tonight. Listen, darling, let's go somewhere together, you and I. Let's get a car and drive up the river, and have dinner.

LARRY. Look, Foolish, this is the night I'm having dinner at your mother's.

PAULA. Oh, Lord! Yes, we can't do that to poor Millicent. (*LARRY rises; gets drink.*) You're the Extra Man. A great big glamorous figure to— (*A sudden thought*) Larry.

LARRY. What?

PAULA. Don't drink tonight. At Mother's, I mean.

LARRY. Now, Paula, don't get maternal. (*Puts down drink.*)

PAULA. I know. (*Rises*) But I want them to see you at your best.

LARRY. (*An impatient step away*) Oh, for God's sake, Paula!

PAULA. (*Comes to him*) All right, all right! Let's talk about something else. Tell me what you've been doing. Tell me everything you've done since yesterday. Did you see Baumann? When d'you go in rehearsal? I want to know everything. Only first I want to be kissed, and kissed, and kissed.

LARRY. (*Takes her in his arms*) My sweet! My marvelous little girl!

PAULA. You love me, don't you, Larry? I know—but say it.

LARRY. You know I worship you. I adore you!

PAULA. Oh, Larry! Darling! Wouldn't it be lovely if we could just stay here all evening. We'd pretend it was our house. We'd order up dinner, and pretend I'd cooked it, and we'd light the gas logs and pretend they were real, and we'd sit together in the firelight, you with a movie magazine, and me with a bit of sewing—doesn't it sound terrible! (*A note of laughter from her; gets handbag from couch.*)

LARRY. It sounds very charming.

PAULA. Just a home boy. (*Opens her handbag to glance at herself in her mirror*) Oh, what a sight! (*Powder; her curls*) Larry, what about the play? Do tell me about it. When do you start rehearsing? Monday?

LARRY. (*Wanders over to the whiskey bottle*) Yes, I think so. Just had a call from Max Kane. He's coming right over. I suppose everything's settled. (*Takes up his drink; tosses it off.*)

PAULA. (*Trying not to notice the size of LARRY's drink*) That's—fine.

LARRY. I suppose it's a wise thing— Max seems to think so. He may be right. A season in the legitimate, before I go back to pictures. Let them see me—they like that sort of thing.

PAULA. He's a funny little man, isn't he? I never met anyone like that. *(Has finished with lipstick and powder-puff. A look at her hair in pocket mirror)* May I use your comb? *(Wanders into the bedroom. Her voice comes up from there, as she disappears)* But he's amusing. I like that kind of person.

LARRY. Oh, Max is all right. I let him talk. But this play thing is a good notion—I've been thinking about it quite a while.

PAULA. *(Re-enters; sits on couch)* I'm crazy to see you in it. It's such a romantic part.

LARRY. Oh, the play's not much, but the part is very interesting. It's practically the only male part in the play.

PAULA. There's the beach-comber.

LARRY. Oh, that doesn't amount to anything— *(Is about to pour himself another drink.)*

PAULA. Oh, Larry! Please don't.

LARRY. *(Puts his glass down with a bang)* God! are you going to keep on— I can't even— I do wish you'd mind your own business!

PAULA. Don't you talk to me like that!

LARRY. Then why don't you leave me alone!

PAULA. *(Rises)* Oh, darling, let's not quarrel. I couldn't stand another. I've been through the most dreadful scene with Ernest.

LARRY. *(Coming to her)* I'm so sorry. Why didn't you tell me? What's the matter?

PAULA. *(Facing him squarely)* Ernest is being sent to London. He expects me to go with him.

LARRY. London! You mean right away!

PAULA. I don't know. Soon. He was so excited about it, and happy. He began telling me how won-

derful it would be—we could run over to Paris in the Spring—I tried—but it only sounded—then he got angry. Finally he said I didn't love him. I wanted to scream, no, I don't! I don't!

LARRY. You didn't do it!

PAULA. (*Not stopping*) And when I think that I've got to see him again tonight. Tonight! (*Laughs a little hysterically*) You'll be at Mother's dinner. (*Laughs again, a high little cracked laugh*) "Tell me about your work. Is Hollywood really—" (*Turns away, trailing off into something like a whimper.*)

LARRY. (*His arms around her*) Paula, stop that! Pull yourself together! Stop it!

PAULA. (*Facing him*) Oh, Larry, what are we going to do? I've got to tell him.

LARRY. But you mustn't. (*The door BUZZER sounds*) Come in!—It's your coffee.

PAULA. I'd forgotten all about it.

(*The WAITER enters R. with a portable table balanced on his shoulder. On it is service for one.*)

LARRY. Right over here, waiter. This will fix you up.

WAITER. (*Has put the table down c.*) Is everything all right, sir?

LARRY. Yes, I think so. (*The WAITER stands, check in hand.*) Oh. (*Takes the check; signs it. A little futile slapping of the pockets in search of change. None is forthcoming.*) Paula, have you got a quarter? I don't seem to—

PAULA. What? (*A gesture to bag on couch*) Help yourself.

WAITER. Shall I pour it for you, sir? (LARRY assents "Yes." LARRY opens the bag; takes out a quarter; gives it to the WAITER.) Thank you. (*He goes out R. PAULA, who has been detached in mood*



*from all this, now swallows down a cup of coffee, black.)*

LARRY. Hay! You must have needed that.

PAULA. Larry, let me tell Ernest. It's so rotten not to. Poor Ernest, he's a dear. *(A sigh. A hand passed over her forehead)* Why, less than a month ago I thought I was in love with him. And you were just one of those million dollar movie stars. Only a month ago! That was another girl—a different person. What a very young person!

LARRY. Now listen to me, Paula.

PAULA. *(Pacing up and down)* I know, I know. Ernest is just the sort of man I ought to marry. And you're the sort that girls are always warned against. I know all the things you've done. I know all the times you've been married—

LARRY. But I'm still married.

PAULA. I don't care! I'm sick of hiding my love for you— What do I care about my prim little life— Miss Hickson's-on-the-Hudson— “One, two, three—turn! One, two—” I want to give it up! I hate it! *(A gesture of helplessness from LARRY)* Do you think I could still love Ernest after all this! After what we've been to each other! Oh, Larry! *(Comes to him.)*

LARRY. Paula, I've reproached myself a thousand times. If only I'd never touched you.

PAULA. Oh, Larry, don't talk to me as though I were the little country girl ruined by the city slicker. I knew what I was doing. I'm proud of it.

LARRY. *(Crosses to c. before speaking)* Paula, for the first time in my life I'm thinking of the other person. *(PAULA turns away with a look of impatience.)* You don't know anything about me. Not a thing. You've read about me in the papers. We met at a cocktail party. You've known me a month.

PAULA. But Larry, how can—

LARRY. I know. It's been a beautiful month. But

you don't really know me. You know less about me than—the waiter who just went out of this room.

PAULA. We've been together every day.

LARRY. Yes—as lovers. But we've hardly spoken a sensible word to each other. You know that I don't like pink, and I eat my oysters without cocktail sauce. But that isn't me.

PAULA. All right. Tell me you murdered a man in Alaska.

LARRY. That's what I mean. You're not even grown up. You're a kid of nineteen. You're nineteen and I'm forty-t— I'm almost forty.

PAULA. All the more reason. College boys in coonskin coats—I hate them!

LARRY. It isn't just age—it's everything. You've never known anything but Park Avenue, and butlers, and Pierre's—

PAULA. That's not true. I've got a job. I go to work every day.

LARRY. It's the fashion to have a job in your crowd. You don't know what it means to be up against it. To be fighting 'em every second.

PAULA. (*Sits on couch*) But Larry! What's that got to do with it? What's that got to do with our love!

LARRY. Love—! Do you want to know the truth, Paula? (*Sits R. of her*) I love you. As much as I can love—any woman. But at my age it isn't real love any more. There's been too many. I've been in love a hundred times. (*Crosses R.*) I've been married to three wives. Would you like to know about them?

PAULA. No!

LARRY. Well, there was Violet. She was a vaudeville hooper, and still is. I'll bet she hasn't changed her act in twenty years. It was a hell of a marriage—rooming houses and dirty kimonas and fried egg sandwiches. We used to fight like wildcats. Then I

broke into pictures, and I left her. (*Sits R. of her*) I made three pictures—Sinners in Eden—King of the Desert—Desert Love. Then I married Edith. She was crazy about my profile. Always talking about it. She was society. Good deal like you, Paula. Funny, I never thought of that before. Anyhow, we were happy for about six months. Then Hollywood got her. Parties—drinks—they were pretty rough in those days. Then one night—you know the rest of it—out in her car alone, drunk as the devil—over the cliff.

PAULA. You were really in love with her, weren't you, Larry?

LARRY. As for Diana—well, you know her. Biggest draw of any woman in pictures. Ambitious! Anything to get on, and knife me to get there. Always saying some day she'd be bigger than I was and now— (*He catches himself as he realizes that he has said too much—rises; crosses R.*) Well, there they are, the three of 'em. Pretty picture, isn't it? I won't tell you about the others. They swarmed on me—every kind and age and description. And I—Oh, what the hell do you want with me!

PAULA. (*Rises; comes to him*) I love you, Larry.

LARRY. You're young and fresh. I'm burned out. For God's sake, Paula, this is the first decent thing I ever did in my life. Listen to what I'm telling you.

PAULA. I won't listen. I love you. Ernest and London and Mother and Dad— I love you, Larry! Nothing else matters in the whole world!

LARRY. Paula, don't say that!

PAULA. (*Breaking in*) Larry, it's no use. Nothing you can say will make any difference. I'm going to tell them! Now! Today! Tonight! (*Starts for her hat. He holds on to her.*)

LARRY. (*Breaking in*) I won't let you! D'you understand! I won't let you smash up your life.

PAULA. I'll smash it up if I want to! (*Gets hat from couch*) I'm going straight home and tell Mother and Dad! And tonight I'm going to tell Ernest!

LARRY. You're not!

PAULA. I am!

LARRY. I tell you—you're not! (*A noisy, prolonged and patterned BUZZ at R. door announces the impending entrance of MAX KANE. It has come insistently in the midst of their argument. The noise quiets them, finally. They stand a moment.*) That—that's Max. (*He glances toward R. door; back to PAULA*) Paula, I want you to promise me—

PAULA. (*Very low and determined*) No. (*MAX, fearful that LARRY is asleep, begins rattling the door.*)

LARRY. (*Turns between answering the door and getting a promise of silence from PAULA*) Paula, for God's sake!

PAULA. It's no use, Larry. My mind is made up. (*MAX knocks on the door. They stand, facing each other.*)

(*LARRY goes to the door. PAULA picks up her bag, her gloves. MAX KANE, whom LARRY now admits, is a small, tight, slim, eel-like man in his thirties; swarthy, neat, and very Broadway. He is unmistakably Jewish, but he does not talk with an accent, unless it is the accent of the Cockney New Yorker. His clothes are extreme in pockets, haberdashery and cut.*)

MAX. Don't you ever get up? (*He sees PAULA*) Oh!

LARRY. (*Ill at ease*) You know Mr. Kane. Miss Jordan.

MAX. Oh, sure! How's the little lady?

PAULA. I'm splendid, thank you. And you?

MAX. Top of the bottle!

PAULA. I'll telephone you, Larry—later.

LARRY. Please think of what I said.

MAX. Am I butting in?

PAULA. No, I was just going. Goodbye. (*At the R. door*) Goodbye, Larry.

LARRY. (*Their eyes meeting*) Goodbye. (*She exits R.*)

MAX. (*Has again placed his hat on his head. It now is perched well back, at a precarious angle. He has a habit of talking through the cigarette in his mouth*) Well, how's the Great Profile! Been out today, or just sticking around here?

LARRY. (*Going over to the table on which the whiskey stands*) No, I wasn't feeling very well, and I slept kind of late. I'm going out to dinner. (*Is pouring his drink.*)

MAX. Why'n't you go up to McDermott's and get a workout every day? Take some of that blubber off you. (*Lifts cover off of toast dish*) What's this? Toast? (*Polishes off a slice.*)

LARRY. I'm all right. Once I go into rehearsal I'll get in shape. (*Tosses off a stiff drink.*)

MAX. (*A gesture toward the drink*) Just keep on with that. That'll fix you.

LARRY. What's up? Did you see Baumann?

MAX. Yeah— Uh, look, Larry, I got a little disappointing news for you, kind of.

LARRY. What's the matter?

MAX. You know how Baumann is—this way, that way—you never know when you got him. Well—

LARRY. For God's sake, come out with it!

MAX. I'm telling you. I go in there this afternoon. He's sitting there—a face like this— (*A gesture*) I start in talking about the play, and what does he do, he says he's got to go South next month. He's sick.

LARRY. (*Sets down his glass*) What's that mean?

MAX. Well, there you are. He's got to go South—and you can't do a play if you're South.

LARRY. Why, he's got to do it. Everything was settled.

MAX. Well, it was talked over, but it wasn't really—you see, in the theatre, unless you got it down in black and white—and *then* sometimes it's no good.

LARRY. (*Pacing*) Well, that's a hell of a— We'll take it away from him. He's not the only producer. The cheap crook!

MAX. Sure, Baumann's no good. That's how he got where he is. But that ain't the point. What does he do, he goes and turns the play over to Jo Stengel.

LARRY. Jo Stengel! I thought he did nothing but highbrow plays—Ibsen.

MAX. Yeah, he likes to do those kind, but right now he needs a little money and he figures this thing sort of looks like box-office.

LARRY. Yes—of course with my draw. Stengel, h'm? He understands I'm to be starred, of course?

MAX. Well, that's just it.

LARRY. What?

MAX. Look, Larry—I don't want you to blame me for this—I been plugging you for months—

LARRY. (*Fixes MAX with a glare of suspicion*) What the hell are you trying to tell me?

MAX. Now, don't go up in the air about it. Because there's sure to be something else.

LARRY. (*Ominously*) Do you mean I'm out! You double-crossing bastard! Do you mean I'm out!

MAX. God, Larry, could I help it?

LARRY. Help it! Why, you dirty little swine—

MAX. Now, hold on! All right. I'm a this and I'm that. But there wasn't any way *I* could stop it. It was all done before I knew anything about it.

LARRY. (*Paces a step or two back and forth, try-*



*ing to get control of himself*) Who's going to play the part?

MAX. Cecil Bellamy.

LARRY. Ha! That piffing little—why, he's English, in the first place.

MAX. Well, the part says English explorer.

LARRY. All right! (*Glares*) I can be English! I can be as English as anybody. (*Pacing in his annoyance; speaking from time to time, throwing lines over his shoulder*) I've waited for this play for six weeks. I could have had a million things.

MAX. Sure. Sure you could. And you can get 'em yet, Larry. Only—

LARRY. Only what? Go on—say it, you little squirt!

MAX. No—only you been a long time away. And you know the public. Besides, there's a *bunch* of 'em want to work on the stage again—picture names.

LARRY. Well, good God, you're not going to compare me!—

MAX. No—no! But you see, you're not a talkie name—

LARRY. I was in talkies. I made some of the first talking pictures that were made.

MAX. Yeah. But— Trouble is, they forget. They forget overnight. You got to get to work again. Get out there and act. Let 'em see you.

LARRY. All right. That's what I got you for. You've got to dig something up. And none of your four shows a day in vaudeville.

MAX. You could have got twenty weeks with that act if you'd behaved yourself.

LARRY. What about those radio people? Didn't you hear from them?

MAX. Well, I'm watching that. The fella's out of town.

LARRY. And the personal appearances—what did you do about that?

MAX. Mm—for personal appearances you got to be right in the limelight. That's my point. They forget about you. The best thing would be a part in a play.

LARRY. All right. But where's the vehicle?

MAX. Well—now—don't jump down my throat again. But I got an idea.

LARRY. What kind of an idea?

MAX. I was thinking about this play again. You know, Larry, I never said anything, but I never did think that was such a hot part for you. (*Fixes LARRY now with a finger*) Do you know the part I would be crazy to play if I was an actor?

LARRY. What?

MAX. That beach-comber.

LARRY. Beach-comber! You're asking me to go on—(*Pounds his chest in outraged vanity*)—and play a part that— Get the hell out of here! Go on! Get out! Get out, you miserable little—

MAX. (*Soothingly*) Now Larry, don't make a mistake.

LARRY. (*Between his teeth*) Get out! Get out before I kick you out!

MAX. (*A shrug. Quietly adjusts his hat*) Have it your own way. (*A gesture with the hand. A last furtive look to see if he means it. He opens the door.*)

LARRY. Wait a minute! (*MAX stands motionless, his hand on the door*) Shut the door! (*MAX does so.*) What makes you think the other part isn't right for me?

MAX. (*Crossing quickly to LARRY*) It's no good. They'll get tired of him. But this *other* fellow! Comes on once—hell of a scene—goes off—they keep waiting for him to come back, and he never does! What a part!

LARRY. Of course his one scene is very nice.

MAX. It's the high spot of the show. You know what'll happen? At the finish this What's-His-

Name'll be trying to take bows, and they'll all be yelling "Renault! Renault!"

LARRY. (*Not unpleased*) You think so, huh?

MAX. A pushover! Now what do you say? (*A quick consulting of his watch*) I'm seeing Stengel right away—he's an old friend of mine— (*Starting to go.*)

LARRY. Well, wait a minute. Don't let on you've talked to me yet. Just say maybe you can *get* me to play it.

MAX. Sure! Leave it to me.

LARRY. Of course—I'd be—featured?

MAX. Maybe it'd be smart not to. Sneak up on 'em.

LARRY. But after all, I'm a star. I got eight thousand a week in pictures. Everybody knows that.

MAX. Mm—that was quite a while ago. And this is the *theatre*. I'll tell you what— It's quarter to five. I'll run right down to Stengel's office; get you in before he leaves there today. I'll call you right back. (*Gets coat.*)

LARRY. Hold on a minute. He mustn't think I'm after this part. Make him come to me.

MAX. Now, Larry, it ain't done that way. You're the actor, and—

LARRY. I'm Larry Renault! I don't go to managers with my hat in my hand. He'd expect to get me for nothing. But if he comes up here, sees this place—

MAX. God, Larry—bringing managers to actors! (*A shrug*) Well, maybe he'll do it as a favor to me. You know, I used to be Jo's office boy. —How long you going to be here?

LARRY. Oh—a long time. I'm not dining till eight.

MAX. (*Prepares to leave*) Well! If I can do it, I'm good. Look, Larry—(*One arm in his coat sleeve, he pauses to give these final instructions*)—

if he comes up here, you want to watch your step. We can't afford to let this part get away from us.

LARRY. (*A slight pause while LARRY paces, nervously, turning the whole thing over in his mind. Suddenly he wheels*) Max, I can't do it.

MAX. (*Very low*) You've got to do it.

LARRY. Larry Renault can't go on and play a mere character part. I won't do it. I won't humiliate myself.

(*The sound of BUZZER. LARRY goes slowly to R. door. MAX drifts thoughtfully upstage, so that he is not seen from the hall doorway. MR. HATFIELD, the assistant manager of the Hotel Versailles, is seen at R. door. He comes a step or two into the doorway, a suave figure in cutaway coat and striped trousers. He goes through the form of bowing deferentially from the waist.*)

HATFIELD. (*Professionally cheery*) Good afternoon, Mr. Renault!

LARRY. Oh! How-do-you-do?

HATFIELD. Beautiful day, isn't it?

LARRY. (*Uneasily*) Yes—ah—

HATFIELD. I've taken the liberty of bringing up your bill again, Mr. Renault. (*A quick warning look from LARRY. An apprehensive look over his shoulder toward MAX, he starts speaking and pushing HATFIELD out of the door*) Our cashier would like to balance his books, so if— (*MAX, as he catches the drift of what is going on, comes cautiously forward a few steps for a look at the proceedings.*)

LARRY. Oh, yes, yes. (*Hurriedly takes the envelope from HATFIELD's hand*) I'll send you down a check. I've someone here now. Thank you very much. (*Quickly closes the door. Stuffs the envel-*

*ope into the pocket of his dressing gown*) Damned impertinence!

MAX. *(With a great show of cheerfulness)* Well! I'll bustle on down, get hold of Stengel— *(On his way, stops to give LARRY two or three heartening slaps on the back)* Come on! Snap out of it! This time next year you'll be riding the high waves!

LARRY. *(With a false air of agreement)* I'm all right.

MAX. Sure! You're swell! Well—goodbye!

LARRY. Oh—Max!

MAX. Huh?

LARRY. *(A transparent attempt at lightness. He even manages a cackle of laughter)* Here's a funny thing! I wonder if you could let me have five dollars. Taxi fare. I didn't get out to the bank—I'm going to this dinner—and what do you think I've got! *(Plunges his hand in his pocket, brings out a little scattering of coins, at which he glances, very amused)* Seventeen cents! Ha-ha!

MAX. Say, I got just enough to get to the office. I'll bring it to you when I come back. *(He goes out R. hurriedly. LARRY stands alone, crosses to C., jingling the coins in his palm. He tosses them on the end table. As he throws them, BUZZER sounds.)*

LARRY. Come in! *(The WAITER has entered R., using his pass key, as LARRY calls to him. He leaves the door open.)*

WAITER. Can I take the table?

*(WARN Dim Out.)*

LARRY. Yes. *(The WAITER comes over, picks up the table, hoists it to his shoulder, turns to leave.)* Oh, waiter!

WAITER. Yes, sir?

LARRY. I just remembered I haven't had a thing to eat all day. I'm not dining till eight. I'll tell you what. Bring me a cup of coffee, good and strong, and—let me see—I think I'll take a caviar sandwich.

WAITER. Yes, sir. (*Hesitates.*)

LARRY. (*Dismisses him with a wave of the hand*) That's all.

WAITER. I'm sorry, Mr. Renault, but were you going to sign for it?

LARRY. What?

WAITER. Well, excuse me, but my orders are that if you sign for it, I can't serve any more food here.

LARRY. What's that! Not serve!— (*Rushes to the telephone*) You get that order up here! I'll tell that manager— You get that order—

WAITER. Yessir. (*He goes out R., closing the door gently behind him.*)

LARRY. (*Just as the WAITER is vanishing. In phone*) Hello! Hello! (*Then very quietly puts hand on hook, then replaces receiver. Immediately the PHONE rings.*) Hello! No, I didn't call. No. Wait a minute. Yes, I did. Send up a bellboy, will you? To go on an errand. (*An afterthought*) Listen. I want Eddie—Eddie, the one that always comes up here. (*Hangs up. A look around the room, searching for something. The silver frame containing PAULA JORDAN'S picture. He goes quickly to it, removes the photograph, props the picture precariously up against the leather frame containing his own picture, brings the silver frame over to the table. Another look around. Notices his cuffs. Removes one link, tosses it on the table with the frame. As he starts to remove the other—*)

THE LIGHTS DIM OUT.

## ACT TWO

### SCENE II

DOCTOR TALBOT'S office. *There is a door at the back, leading into the laboratory and examination*



rooms. The door at the Left opens on the reception room; the door at the Right connects with the TALBOTS' house proper.

The room is pine-paneled, restful, simply and tastefully furnished as a doctor's consulting room. In a niche over the door at the back there is a bust of Hippocrates. Built-in book shelves extend to the ceiling. The doctor's flat-topped desk is at the Right, turned slightly at an angle, with chairs R. and L. of it. On it, in addition to the usual desk furnishings, are two telephones, and a large photograph of the doctor's wife and his fourteen-year-old son. A comfortable chair for patients is at the side of the doctor's desk. A revolving bookcase and small bench is at the Left of the stage. There is a clock above door L., a barometer above door R.

As the curtain rises MISS ALDEN, the nurse attendant, enters from the laboratory. She is about twenty-seven, poised, capable without being bustling, intelligent, and attractive in her white uniform. She goes into the reception room L.

As MISS ALDEN gets C., the CLOCK strikes five. A clear and pleasing sound. A brief moment of silence. DR. TALBOT enters R. He is wearing his topcoat and hat. His whole aspect is that of a man wearied almost to the point of exhaustion.

He has an hour of consultation work ahead of him. He glances at his desk pad; presses his desk BUZZER. It is heard sounding in the reception room, off L. He drops into his chair.

MISS ALDEN enters immediately. Between DR. TALBOT and MISS ALDEN there is a friendly professional understanding. They convey to each other, with a look or a brief sentence, the entire history of a patient's case.

MISS ALDEN. (*There is a slip of paper in her hand. She goes directly to DR. TALBOT'S desk and places the slip of paper before him*) There are six in the waiting room. And Mr. Parker telephoned. It's his sinus again, but he can't get here till seven. He wants to know if you'll see him.

DR. TALBOT. (*Wearily*) Oh, I suppose so.

MISS ALDEN. Did you see Mrs. Talbot as you came through? She wanted to talk to you.

DR. TALBOT. (*Rather distractedly. Rises, removes coat*) No. No, I didn't.

MISS ALDEN. You look all in. It must have been tougher than you thought it would be.

DR. TALBOT. Fierce! Carcinoma of the head of the pancreas. On the table an hour. It was a beautiful operation.

MISS ALDEN. (*Taking TALBOT'S coat and hat*) You must be limp as a rag. Don't you want a cup of coffee?

DR. TALBOT. (*As he rises he takes off his suit-coat and goes toward c. door*) No, I'll be all right.

MISS ALDEN. (*An afterthought*) Oh, how's the patient? Did he live?

DR. TALBOT. Yes, he's fine. (*Exits c. The PHONE rings. It is his private wire, and the ring is rather fainter than that of the ordinary phone.*)

MISS ALDEN. (*Coat and hat on her arm. Goes to the phone*) Doctor Talbot's office. Who is it, please? Well, who is it? I'm sorry, but I have to have the name. (*A little knowing smile*) Oh, yes, Mrs. Packard. He's in. Just a minute. (*Goes to the door c., which is slightly open*) Doctor!

TALBOT. (*Unseen*) Yes?

MISS ALDEN. (*With no little delight*) Call on your private wire.

TALBOT. Who is it?

MISS ALDEN. (*A little smile*) Mrs. Packard.

TALBOT. (*Quickly*) I'm not here!

MISS ALDEN. (*With devilish elation*) I'm awfully sorry. (*Is going toward L. door, very pleased with herself*) I've already told her you're in. (*Goes out L.*)

DR. TALBOT. (*Off*) Oh, for God's—! (*He enters. He has changed his suit coat to a roomier older coat. He strides into the room, halts a moment and stands glaring at the waiting telephone. With resignation he goes to his desk; sits R. of it; speaks into phone*) Hello. Now Kitty—Kitty! But there's no occa— No, I can't come over! You know perfectly well these are my office hours. I've got a whole roomful of—there's nothing the matter with you—take an aspirin—well, I've been busy. I'll see you tonight at the Jordans—of course, you can go. There's nothing the matter with you. Other women! (*LUCY TALBOT enters quietly R. She does not mean to overhear the telephone conversation, but she finds herself in the midst of it and must stand a moment before she is impelled to make her presence known. She is a wren-like, somewhat faded little figure, but possessed of a quiet power, too, as well as poise and gentle breeding. Her dress is dark, almost prim, relieved with white collars and cuffs, very simple and delicate. TALBOT, rather frantic at the telephone, does not see her. His hand is pressed to his forehead*) Of course there's no other woman. Kitty, you're driving me absolutely— (*LUCY, in order to let her husband know that she is in the room, shuts the door behind her firmly enough to attract his attention. She advances a few steps into the room as he rather blunderingly goes on with his conversation, changing its tone completely, or attempting*) I think you'd better rest for an hour, and then take a mild bromide—say an aspirin. Well, I have patients in the office. There's no cause for alarm. (*He hangs*

*up quickly. Then, with a great assumption of ease, he turns to his wife, rising*) Hello, Lucy!

LUCY. (*In the same tone*) Hello, Jo!

TALBOT. How are you, dear?

LUCY. I'm fine. And you?

TALBOT. I'm all right.

LUCY. Anything new?

TALBOT. (*Very airily. Sits R. of desk*) No. No.

LUCY. Just the same old thing, h'm?

TALBOT. What?

LUCY. I mean—unreasonable women patients.

TALBOT. Oh—yes—she's not really sick. I just prescribed a sedative. She doesn't need anything.

LUCY. (*Sits L. of desk*) How about an apple a day?

TALBOT. (*Startled*) What's that?

LUCY. Don't bother, dear.

TALBOT. Huh?

LUCY. Don't bother. Because I know all about it.

TALBOT. Why—uh—what are you talking about?

LUCY. Please, Jo! I'm not going to make a scene. You know I never do, do I? Remember how nicely I behaved about the others? Mrs. Whiting, and the Dalrymple girl, and that Ferguson woman, and Dolly, and—(*A swift look around*)—where do you keep your files?

TALBOT. (*With great dignity*) I tell you, you are quite wrong about this woman.

LUCY. (*Rises*) Now, Jo. I knew when it started, and I knew when you began to tire of her. They came at about the same time, didn't they? And now she's at the insistent stage. It's a great bore, isn't it, darling. (*He turns his eyes away from her, and with that gesture admits the truth of what she has said*) Don't think that I don't mind, Jo. I pretend not to—but I do. But I can't let it tear me to pieces the way it did that first time. It was just before

Wayne was born—remember? I thought the world had come to an end. The noble young physician was just a masher.

TALBOT. Surely, a little more than that.

LUCY. A great deal more, Jo. That's what makes it so pathetic. You are really two people. One is so magnificent, the other so shoddy.

TALBOT. (*His fingers drum nervously for a moment on the table. Then slowly, painfully, he speaks of himself*) I suppose it's natural enough. Son of a railroad brakeman—what can you expect?

LUCY. Mm. I'm sure he blew the whistle for every hired girl between here and Albany. I wonder how your mother felt about that.

TALBOT. Don't.

LUCY. She's that other side of you—the lovely side, Jo.

TALBOT. Perhaps if she had lived I'd have been different. (*A gesture that breaks the introspective mood*) I don't know why you've stayed with me all these years. Why did you?

LUCY. (*To above desk*) A very foolish reason, Jo. Because I'm still in love with you. Isn't that funny? You'd think I'd have more pride.

TALBOT. I'm in love with you, Lucy. It's never been otherwise. Those other women—it's like gambling or drinking or drugs. You just keep on.

LUCY. No, Jo, that isn't it at all. Do you know what I think? I think you're still the little boy living over on Tenth avenue, a little in awe of the girl from Murray Hill. The little boy who thinks that sex is something to be ashamed of. And that's why—forgive me, Jo—all these women in your life have been a little common—a little bit Tenth avenue, too. I know you love me, Jo. Try to think of me as a woman, too.

TALBOT. (*His hand tightening on hers*) Lucy,

darling, I feel closer to you now than I have in years.

LUCY. I'm glad, Jo.

TALBOT. I never want to see that woman again as long as I live.

LUCY. Nonsense! See her as often as you like. You're seeing her tonight, aren't you? Isn't she going to the Jordans'?

TALBOT. Good God, yes! I forgot. If only we could stay home tonight, just the two of us.

LUCY. I'd like to, too, Jo. But we've got to go.

TALBOT. Why do we have to go?

LUCY. Now, Jo!

TALBOT. Why did you ever accept it?

LUCY. What could I do? Say we had an engagement? They'd only ask us some other night.

TALBOT. But why do they ask us at all? What's it all about?

LUCY. Because we had them for dinner. And before that they had us for dinner, and that's why we had them. (*A little light laugh from the two of them.*)

MISS ALDEN. (*Enters hurriedly L. Though she makes no undue commotion, it is evident that she is disturbed*) Doctor! —Oh, I'm sorry. (*Seeing MRS. TALBOT*) —Mr. Oliver Jordan is outside, and he seems quite ill. I think you'd—

TALBOT. Have him come right in. (*MISS ALDEN goes out L. quickly. TALBOT'S head comes up. He pulls himself together. He is at once the professional man.*)

LUCY. (*Speaks on "Oliver Jordan is outside"*) I'll go. (*She goes out R. immediately. TALBOT has risen. He crosses quickly to R. door, which has stood open. As he stands at the door MISS ALDEN'S voice is heard, off.*)

MISS ALDEN. You're fine now. Here—let me



help you. (OLIVER JORDAN enters, assisted by MISS ALDEN. Obviously he has had an accute attack, from which he is just emerging. TALBOT supports him as he comes through the door. MISS ALDEN, with her free hand, closes the door behind her.)

TALBOT. (*Breaking in*) Why, what's this, Oliver? Come over here and sit down. Take it easy. That's right.

OLIVER. (*Being assisted toward the chair L. of desk. His hand held over the region of the pain*) It's right here.

TALBOT. (*Quickly, to MISS ALDEN*) Nitrate of amyl—quick! (*MISS ALDEN vanishes into the laboratory. As OLIVER drops into the chair, TALBOT quickly undoes his tie, unbuttons his shirt and undershirt. MISS ALDEN returns immediately with the amyl, gives it to TALBOT, who quickly breaks the covering, holds the drug to OLIVER'S nose*) Sniff that! (*Almost immediately, under the influence of the strong drug, OLIVER revives. MISS ALDEN leaning over him, her hands resting lightly on his shoulders*) There! That's better! (*TALBOT takes his stethoscope from his inner coat pocket, applies it over OLIVER'S heart.*)

OLIVER. (*A feeble gesture of protest*) I'm all right now. (*Heedless of OLIVER'S protest, TALBOT concentrates on the examination. At its conclusion he straightens, stands completely still for a second, looking down at OLIVER. There is a quick exchange of glances between TALBOT and MISS ALDEN.*)

TALBOT. (*Crossing to behind desk*) Yes, of course you are.

OLIVER. (*Relieved. Smiles wanly*) I've got no business doing this. What's the matter with me?

TALBOT. (*Sits. As MISS ALDEN exits c. Closes door*) How long has this been going on? Have you had it before?

OLIVER. (*Buttoning his shirt*) Why, no, not like this. I started to walk home from the Athletic Club and suddenly I felt—funny. I managed to get into a taxi, and—here I am. What is it, anyhow?

TALBOT. Oh, probably a little indigestion. (*A gesture that vaguely points in the direction of the heart*) What have you been eating? What did you have for lunch?

OLIVER. Why, nothing that would upset me. A little fish—

TALBOT. If I were you, I'd watch my diet. Simple food, and not too much of it.

OLIVER. Well, if that's all—

TALBOT. I'd like to have you come in again in a day or two. More thorough examination. How's tomorrow?

OLIVER. Tomorrow—that's Saturday. I'd rather make it next week some time.

TALBOT. Now—pretend this is a business appointment. Tomorrow—what time? When do you leave your office?

OLIVER. (*Good-naturedly humoring the doctor*) All right, all right! How about two-thirty?

TALBOT. I'm at the hospital until four. Make it four-fifteen?

OLIVER. Four-fifteen. (*TALBOT makes a note of this on his pad; seeing OLIVER rise, TALBOT also rises*) Well! (*Finds himself surprisingly steady. Looks about in mild triumph*) Why, I feel great! I may fool you and not come in at all tomorrow.

TALBOT. You show up here. Broken appointments are charged double.

OLIVER. You boys certainly clean up. What did I get for my money today? A whiff of smelling salts.

TALBOT. Look here—what're you doing tonight?

OLIVER. Huh? Why, you're coming to dinner, among others.

TALBOT. Can you sneak out early, and go to bed?  
(*WARN Dim Out.*)

OLIVER. Why—I think we're all going to theatre.

TALBOT. (*A slow cross to c.*) I wouldn't do it, if I were you. Take it easy for a while. Avoid any excitement, or emotional strain. Stop worrying. Stop thinking about business.

OLIVER. What does that mean? The old pump out of order?

TALBOT. No, no. (*MISS ALDEN enters c. with card index box. Busies herself at desk*) But it's bound to feel the effect of any physical disorder. That's all.

OLIVER. (*A pause. Thoughtfully*) I—see.

TALBOT. (*Heartily*) Well, see you later, h'm? Dinner at eight?

OLIVER. (*Starting L.*) Yes, I believe so. Goodbye.

TALBOT. Goodbye, Oliver.

OLIVER. (*At door L.*) I'm—I'm not fooled.  
(*Exits. TALBOT stands motionless, looking after OLIVER.*)

MISS ALDEN. (*Comes down to TALBOT*) How bad is it?

TALBOT. Coronary artery. Spasm.

MISS ALDEN. How long will he live?

TALBOT. A few months—weeks—days, even.  
(*Walks slowly to his desk.*)

MISS ALDEN. You're sure?

TALBOT. Positive. You can tell it like—(*Snaps his fingers*)—that.

MISS ALDEN. Poor fellow.

TALBOT. (*Sits R. of desk. Assents, almost unintelligibly*) Yes.

MISS ALDEN. (*Assumes again her professional manner*) Ready? (*TALBOT nods. MISS ALDEN goes to the L. door, opens it, stands looking into the outer room*) All right, Mrs. Beveridge! (*She remains at the door, waiting for the new patient to enter.*)

*The DOCTOR still sits thoughtfully at his desk. His head comes up, his face assumes the professional look for the next patient.)*

THE LIGHTS DIM OUT.

## ACT TWO

### SCENE III

*The butler's pantry at the JORDANS'. It is a rectangular room, its walls, woodwork and curtains in a pale yellow, very cool and agreeable. It is a workmanlike place, equipped for serving. There is a door Left.*

*Right Center, between sink and Frigidaire, is large cupboard, its shelves filled with plates, cups, saucers, glassware; flower vases on the topmost shelves; compote dishes. Underneath are drawers. Just above these is a broad shelf for laying out plates, etc.*

*In the lower Right of the room is a sink, to which is attached, at one end, a drainboard. In the back wall, c., is a very large built-in Frigidaire icebox with a solitary green bottle of Kalak water on top of it.*

*Against the Left wall, just next to the kitchen door and above it, is a second cupboard with a serving shelf. A little to the Left of Center is a kitchen table, its narrow end turned toward the audience. Two chairs are alongside this table.*

*There is a small portable radio on the cupboard shelf at the Right.*

*The time is about five-thirty.*

*At the Rise, the RADIO is going full tilt—a popular tune played by one of the hotel tea dance orchestras. DORA, the only occupant of the pantry, is preparing for tonight's dinner. As she works she hums happily in compliment to the radio's music, and occasionally tosses in a few words of the lyric—when she knows them. She has been wiping glasses. There are already eight of them—champagne glasses—on the table. She finishes the last two, puts them with the others. Brings down ten dinner plates from a shelf, puts them on the serving shelf.*

*There is about her a certain elation and bloom, the reason for which now becomes apparent. She holds out her hand, on which is her new wedding ring. Holds the hand, thus ornamented, up to her own enchanted gaze.*

*Enter L. MRS. WENDEL, the cook. MRS. WENDEL is Swedish, but with no trace of accent. She is an ample woman in her mid-fifties; is dressed in white, and wears a large apron. Rolled up sleeves. Her natural amiability is clouded at the moment by a bad tooth, and her face is tied up in a great toothache bandage. Her left arm encircles a yellow mixing bowl, which rests on one broad hip. In the hand that holds the bowl she grasps an envelope containing a letter. With the other hand she busily stirs the mixture as she talks. She drops the letter on the table, goes to the icebox. Relinquishing her spoon for a time, she opens the icebox, deftly removes the top from a milk bottle, pours a little milk into the mixture within the bowl, replaces the milk bottle, slams the icebox door. DORA, in the meantime, having got the necessary number of plates from the R. cupboard, is now occupied in scanning them to see that they are properly shining. Occasionally*

*she rubs one with a tea cloth, or runs hot water from the tap over a cloudy looking plate.*

MRS. WENDEL. (*At the icebox*) I put a letter there for Gustave. It just came.

DORA. What?

MRS. WENDEL. A letter came for Gustave. Turn that lower. (*Indicating radio. DORA modifies the RADIO music. Drifts over to the table to look inquisitively at the letter*) It's from that place he came from over in Europe.

DORA. (*Reads the postmark*) Lu-cerny. S-u-i-s-s-e. (*Spelling it*) Where's that, Mrs. Wendel?

MRS. WENDEL. (*Coming down to peer over DORA's shoulder*) It's what they call Switzerland. I got one, too, today.

DORA. It looks like a woman, the writing.

MRS. WENDEL. Mine was from my brother. He wants fifty dollars.

DORA. (*Tucks the letter in her apron pocket. Going to the sink*) Letters from your folks is always money. (*Fills a glass with water, turns, stands sipping it, her gaze on MRS. WENDEL, who is briskly beating her mixture at table*) How's your tooth, Mrs. Wendel? Any better?

MRS. WENDEL. I put essence of cloves on it, but it keeps jumping. I wish I could get to the dentist. Only for this dinner I could have.

DORA. Yeah, it had to be just today, or else we could have had a celebration. (*Again DORA's gaze fastens itself upon the new ring.*)

MRS. WENDEL. I have to laugh the way you thought you could fool me. The minute I looked at your face I knew you was married.

DORA. Remember, don't you tell a living soul. I better take my ring off. (*Speaking as she removes her ring, knots it again in the handkerchief, tucks*



*the handkerchief into her pocket*) If that Ricci sees it, I wouldn't put nothing past him.

MRS. WENDEL. I wouldn't breathe it to him. (*A sudden thought*) It don't seem hardly right, getting married yesterday and coming right back to work today.

DORA. It was fun, though. I was all excited and laughing, but Gustave, he was so scared you'd think he was getting hung.

MRS. WENDEL. The men are always like that.

DORA. He was all right, though, after. When we had dinner. You ought to go to that place, some time, where we ate. For a dollar you get choice of crab meat or soup, and then there's fish, and then choice of pork chops with applesauce, prime ribs of beef au jus, or chicken a la Calcutta. We took that.

MRS. WENDEL. I got chicken for them tonight. I'm glad because it don't take much fixing. I was two hours on the lobster aspic—they're such a job—and then they'll eat it up in five minutes.

DORA. It's good, though. I hope there's some left over.

MRS. WENDEL. I made the big one so there would be. Wait till you see it.

DORA. They got a lord and lady coming, haven't they? I wonder how she'll look.

MRS. WENDEL. They look just like anybody else—only homelier.

DORA. I think they're having mostly old people. Miss Paula won't be there. She's going out with Ernest.

MRS. WENDEL. When they get married, *that'll* be a lot of cooking.

DORA. If you ask me, I don't think she's going to marry him. He's always calling up and she's always making excuses.

MRS. WENDEL. I don't like him. I peeked in at him once through the door. He hasn't any It. (Gus-

TAVE enters L., bearing a tray and the remains of a depleted tea.)

DORA. Oh, hello!

GUSTAVE. (*Puts down the tray with something of a thump*) Thought she'd never get through. Sip. Sip. (*He is at DORA's side R.C. as soon as he can get there; kisses her tenderly.*)

MRS. WENDEL. (*With a fondly deprecatory gesture*) Oh! (*Exits L.*)

DORA. I thought you were never coming back. I was going to go up there and get you.

GUSTAVE. (*A final kiss. Removing his coat and hanging it over the back of a chair back of table*) I was wishing she'd choke. All I could think of was getting back to my little Dora. (*He takes from a hook a long apron designed for protection in rougher work. Ties it around his waist.*)

DORA. I wish this dinner was over.

GUSTAVE. (*Placing tray on shelf L.*) We'll serve 'em fast. Take the plates away from them. What's the meat course?

DORA. Chicken. (*Putting chair near door L. GUSTAVE takes from the shelf a long and vicious looking carving knife, together with a knife sharpener. He proceeds to wield the two with expert strokes. DORA goes back R. to polishing her plates*) I had my ring on again. I wish I could keep it on all the time. (*Puts her hand in the apron pocket. Encounters GUSTAVE's letter*) Oh, here's a letter came for you. From Switzerland. (*Holds out the letter.*)

GUSTAVE. (*Puts the knife and sharpener down on the table a shade too calmly. Takes the letter, barely glances at it*) Oh! Yes. It will be from my sister. (*Puts it in his pocket. He turns away; goes to the cupboard L.*)

DORA. Why don't you read it?

GUSTAVE. (*Busy with reaching down the glasses*)

It will be the same story. They must buy a new plow—my brother-in-law is sick—there is another baby coming.

DORA. I'd like to see what Europe is like. I bet it's interesting. You been all over, haven't you?

GUSTAVE. A good butler should be a cosmopolitan. I have worked in France, in Germany, in England—even one winter I was in Cairo.

DORA. Oh, how I'd like to go traveling and see all those things with you. Gustave! Couldn't we go! Couldn't we save our money, both of us, and maybe go next summer?

GUSTAVE. You would not like it. Anyway it is finished over there. Kaput!

DORA. I would so like it! And I could meet your folks. Maybe you're ashamed of me!

GUSTAVE. *(Comes quickly over to her. He has the glass and towel in his hands, she the plate and towel in her hands)* No, no, my darling! My darling Dora. *(They kiss.)*

DORA. My wonderful husband! How does it happen some other girl didn't grab you?

GUSTAVE. I was waiting for you, my beautiful Dora. *(Kiss.)*

DORA. Oh, Gustave, I never been so happy. I would be just perfectly happy, only if it wasn't for that Ricci.

GUSTAVE. Don't be a silly child! What can he do! *(MRS. WENDEL enters L. In triumph she is carrying the aspic, an imposing structure in a great platter. The aspic is in the form of a hollow ring. Inside the ring are piled the chunks of lobster. In one hand, though both are grasping the platter, MRS. WENDEL carries a very large three-pronged fork, the center prong protruding beyond the other two. The handle is a foot long.)*

MRS. WENDEL. God be thanked, this is finished. *(Depositing it on the c. table.)*

GUSTAVE. Look out for those glasses.

MRS. WENDEL. (*Fork in hand, she steps back and surveys her handiwork*) And it's the best one I ever made, if I do say so. Here it is, almost six, and I've been working on it since three. She couldn't get another cook in New York to do what I've done today with a toothache killing me. They'd say, "I'm sick and you can cook your own dinner." (*At the Frigidaire, gets some parsley. She has been gesticulating with the fork during this speech. She now leans over the dish, distributing the parsley.*)

DORA. It's just beautiful, Mrs. Wendel.

GUSTAVE. A good thing for the toothache is to hold a little brandy like this. (*Tips his head to one side, to illustrate holding a mouthful of brandy.*)

MRS. WENDEL. I'm afraid to take anything with the dinner to cook.

GUSTAVE. (*Goes to cupboard L., brings forth a decanter of brandy*) Nonsense! A mouthful won't hurt you. Just a *schluck*. (*Reaching for one of the frail glasses standing on the table.*)

MRS. WENDEL. Well, all right. I'm half crazy. (*GUSTAVE pours her a drink.*) You take one, too—and Dora. We'll drink a toast. The bride and groom!

GUSTAVE. That's fine! Heh, Dora? (*Pouring two more drinks.*)

DORA. All right. I'll turn on the wedding march.

MRS. WENDEL. Yes, that's right. (*Crosses R.*) I'll stand up for you.

DORA. (*She goes to RADIO; turns it up so that the orchestra comes up loudly*) Oh, that's good! Come on, Gustave! (*Takes his arm.*)

MRS. WENDEL. (*Very much in the spirit of the thing, her voice high above the music. They join MRS. WENDEL at R.*) To the bride and groom. Skoal!

GUSTAVE and DORA. (*In unison*) Skoal! (*A little excited giggle from DORA. The three of them execute a little march. The kitchen door flies open. It is RICCI. He takes one dramatic step into the room and stands, a menacing figure, confronting the three.*)

DORA. (*A terrified half-whisper*) Gustave!

RICCI. You lying little bitch! Porco di madona!

DORA. (*Breaking in*) Gustave! I'm scared!

GUSTAVE. (*A gesture to quiet her*)  
I tend to him. } (*Together*)  
MRS. WENDEL. Get out of my kitchen!

RICCI. (*Advances a step or two, crouchingly*) So! You sneak off and get married, eh?

DORA. No, we ain't! No such thing!

MRS. WENDEL. (*Breaking in*) You're crazy! They ain't married!

RICCI. Oh, no! Then why do you tell Josephine next door, who tell the chauffeur, who tell *me*, that they go to City Hall—

MRS. WENDEL. I did not, you lying Wop! (*Quickly, to DORA*) I didn't breathe it!

DORA. Oh! Oh!

GUSTAVE. (*On MRS. WENDEL'S speech*) Oh, Mrs. Wendel!

RICCI. (*Also on MRS. WENDEL'S speech*) So! It is true! (*Another step forward.*) } (*Together*)

DORA. (*Continuing*) No! No!  
(*Cowering behind GUSTAVE.*)

RICCI. (*Continuing*) It is true!

(*He is at the table. His fist comes down on the table with a crash. It encounters the handle of the big knife which GUSTAVE has recently sharpened. He grasps it and brings it up slowly into view.*)

(WARN Blackout.)

DORA. ( <i>Hysterically</i> ) Oh, my God!	}	(Together)
MRS. WENDEL. ( <i>At the sight of the knife</i> ) Og, Hedon!		
GUSTAVE. ( <i>Shoves the two WOMEN behind him, protectingly</i> ) Put down that knife! ( <i>DORA is whimpering with terror.</i> )		

RICCI. (*Knife in hand, he pushes back his sleeve as he talks, preparing for battle*) If Ricci not have her, then no one will have her!

DORA. Oh, God! Oh, God!	}	(Together)
GUSTAVE. Put it down, I tell you! ( <i>A wild glance around. Sees the great fork which MRS. WENDEL has in her hand. Seizes it as a desperate weapon</i> ) Put it down!		

DORA. No, no! Gustave!

MRS. WENDEL. Gud hjalp mig!

RICCI. Ah-h-h-h! ( <i>To GUSTAVE</i> )	}	(Together)
So you think you can stop me, eh? First you want me to take care of you!		

(*Eyes fixed on his adversary, knife poised, he begins a stealthy advance, around the end of the table. GUSTAVE, fork in hand, is crouched to meet his advance. There is a bit of jockeying for position. GUSTAVE retreats a step; shakes off the restraining hands of the WOMEN.*)

DORA. Gustave! He'll kill you! He'll kill you! Don't fight him! Don't fight him! Ricci! Oh, my God! Oh, my God! Oh, my God!

MRS. WENDEL. (*Simultaneously*) Stop them! Stop them! Get the missus! Somebody stop them! Oh, min Gud!

(*For a second there is complete silence, broken only*



*by the music over the RADIO—a gay and lilt-ing tune. Then the moment arrives. GUSTAVE, seeing his opportunity, makes an unexpected lunge, which surprises RICCI, who had meant to make the attack. Stepping quickly backward to avoid GUSTAVE'S weapon, he comes into violent contact with the laden table, which overturns with a crash. Down go wine-glasses, plates, aspic. GUSTAVE follows up his offensive. The two men grapple on the floor, knife and fork flashing. Screams from the WOMEN as the table is overturned. A particularly terrifying scream from DORA as the MEN roll on the floor. The MUSIC is gayer than ever.)*

MRS. WENDEL. (*As the table overturns*) The aspic! (*The table crashes.*)

BLACKOUT.

## ACT TWO

### SCENE IV

*Upstairs sitting room at the JORDANS'. Six o'clock. The lamps are lighted. MILLICENT JORDAN, in a negligee, is at the telephone.*

MILLICENT. Yes, that will be all right. No, I only want those four. I want the ones that played at Mrs. Post's last week. No, no, it isn't for dancing. I explained all that on Monday. It's just music through dinner. And be sure to give me the one with the black mustache that plays the violin. And tell him he's not to come into the dining room and start playing at us. He's to stay where he is, with the others. Now, they'll wear their red coats, won't they?

They're so romantic. And I don't want anything but Hungarian music. That gypsy stuff, or whatever you call it. What? Yes, that's it. (*Attempts the word without much assurance*) Czigane. Yes. (DORA enters R. She is plainly still agitated by the events that have just taken place below stairs.) And they'll be here no later than quarter to eight. You know the address? That's it. Goodbye. (*Hangs up.*)

DORA. Madam—

MILLCENT. Yes, Dora?

DORA. (*Comes to R. of sofa. In considerable embarrassment*) Cook wants to know if she can come in. (*A gesture toward the hall*) She wants to speak to you a minute.

MILLCENT. Why, yes. Tell her to come in. (*Wordlessly and a little apprehensively, DORA summons MRS. WENDEL from the hall. DORA retreats a step or two, but cannot bear to withdraw until she has caught at least a bit of the scene to follow. MRS. WENDEL advances to front of sofa, a figure of portent. The bandage has been removed, but occasionally, as she talks, her hand goes to the aching face*) Yes, Mrs. Wendel?

MRS. WENDEL. It's the lobster aspic.

MILLCENT. The aspic? What about it?

MRS. WENDEL. It didn't turn out right. I think it must have been the gelatine. It didn't set.

MILLCENT. What do you mean? You can't use it?

MRS. WENDEL. No, ma'am. It's no good.

MILLCENT. (*Rises and crosses to c.*) Do you mean to tell me at this hour! —Why, it's six o'clock — What do you mean, you can't use it? —Let me see it. (*Makes as though to accompany MRS. WENDEL to the kitchen. DORA makes her escape R.*)

MRS. WENDEL. It's no use. I threw it away. It was like water.

MILLCENT. This is inexcusable. I particularly wanted this dinner to be— You can use the lobster, can't you? (*Pacing R. and L.*)

MRS. WENDEL. No, ma'am. It's—uh—I've never seen lobster like it. I don't think it's good.

MILLCENT. Well, this is a fine state of things! Where's my dinner? What are we going to do?

MRS. WENDEL. I thought maybe we could send for some crab meat, all ready, and I'd cook it Newburg.

MILLCENT. But the aspic was so dressy! It looks so smart when it's served.

MRS. WENDEL. Yes, ma'am. But this one wouldn't have.

MILLCENT. (*A gesture of accepting the inevitable*) All right. Send for some crab meat. I'll tell you what you do. Is Ricci here?

MRS. WENDEL. (*Hesitatingly*) Yes, ma'am.

MILLCENT. Have him drive over to Schultz's, on Lexington, and bring it right back.

MRS. WENDEL. Ricci isn't feeling very good.

MILLCENT. What's the matter with him?

MRS. WENDEL. He hurt himself. He slipped and fell and there was a thing there, and he—hurt himself. (*A gesture indicating an injury to the face.*)

MILLCENT. Where? When did this happen?

MRS. WENDEL. It was the swinging door. I don't know much about it. I wasn't there.

DORA. (*Enters R.*) Excuse me. Miss Carlotta Vance is calling on Mr. Jordan.

MILLCENT. On the telephone?

DORA. No, ma'am. She's downstairs.

MILLCENT. Downstairs!

MRS. WENDEL. I'll call Schultz up, Mrs. Jordan, and have them send it right over.

MILLCENT. Yes, do that. Tell them I want it right away. It's an emergency. (MRS. WENDEL *exits*)

R.) Dora, what do you mean—downstairs? Miss Vance is coming to dinner at eight. Are you sure?

DORA. Yes, ma'am. She's calling on Mr. Jordan.

MILLCENT. How did you happen to go to the door? Where's Gustave?

DORA. He isn't feeling very good.

MILLCENT. This is fantastic! What's the matter with him?

DORA. He hurt himself.

MILLCENT. I must be going mad! What's the matter with this household? Why, I never in all my life— (CARLOTTA'S voice from off R.)

CARLOTTA. Yoo-hoo! Millicent! Where are you?

MILLCENT. Oh, dear! (Below her breath. Then raising her voice) In here, Carlotta! (A gesture indicating that DORA is to show her the way. But CARLOTTA does not wait to be ushered. DORA exits L.)

CARLOTTA. (Entering R. with a rush) Hello, Millicent darling!

MILLCENT. Carlotta, dear!

CARLOTTA. Oh, what a ducky little room! You don't mind my rushing up, do you? I just popped in to see Oliver.

MILLCENT. Really! How nice! But I don't think he's—

CARLOTTA. Well, I'll wait. Anything to be out of those streets. (Sinks into sofa) Whew!

MILLCENT. (Appalled to see CARLOTTA loosen her furs and make preparations for something of a stay) Perhaps it's something I could tell Oliver. Sometimes he stops at the club— Dora!

CARLOTTA. (Breaking in) No, it's business. I'm afraid I've done something rather naughty. I've come to confess.

MILLCENT. (As DORA re-enters L.) Dora, Mr. Jordan hasn't come in, has he?

DORA. No, madam, he hasn't. (DORA makes as though to go out L.)

CARLOTTA. Oh, could I have a whiskey and soda? Millicent, do you mind? I'm dying!

MILLICENT. Why, of course. Dora, a whiskey and soda for Miss Vance. (DORA *exits* R.)

CARLOTTA. I'm absolutely cracked up. I'm simply depleted. I've been in every office building between the Battery and the Bronx. Do you mind if I take my shoes off?

MILLICENT. (*Sits chair* L.C.) No—please do. (CARLOTTA *slips her feet halfway out of her pumps, one foot on the floor, the heel out, her knees crossed so that the slipper of the other foot dangles from her toe as she talks.*)

CARLOTTA. Oh! (*A sigh of relief*) What a city! I left the hotel at eleven this morning, a young and lovely girl, and now look at me! An old woman! I took on ten years just trying to get from the Barclay to Times Square. Then, when we reached my building there was a crowd outside worse than Bank Holiday. It took me five minutes to fight my way through it, and it turned out to be a man selling rubberless garters at two for a quarter. I told the taxi driver to wait, and he said, "Lady, I ain't got time to wait—I got three children." Then I had a nice, restful luncheon with four lawyers—it was up on the seventy-eighth floor of the Whatsis Building—the Sky Club—a cloud floated right into my soup.

MILLICENT. Isn't it awful? But we get used to it.

CARLOTTA. The minute I've seen Oliver I'm going right home and pop myself into bed and not get up until noon tomorrow. Thank God I don't have to go to some dreadful dinner tonight.

MILLICENT. (*In a tone of ice*) Why—you're coming here.

CARLOTTA. Am I? So I am. How simply enchanting! Why, of course—the Ferncliffes. That means a cozy little game of bridge. Well, I can always stay awake for that.

MILLICENT. But we're going to the theatre.

CARLOTTA. Oh, how delightful! I always enjoy a new play. What are we seeing?

MILLICENT. We're going to see "Say It With Music."

CARLOTTA. Oh—charming! I thought it was *so* amusing.

MILLICENT. You've seen it?

CARLOTTA. Oh, I don't mind seeing it again. He's very funny—(*A vague gesture*)—with the cigar.

DORA. (*Enters R., carrying a large florist's box whose contents are so long that the stems protrude from one end. The cover has been removed; one sees a profusion of roses. She goes to MILLICENT*) These just came, Mrs. Jordan.

MILLICENT. Ah! (*Takes the box*) How lovely! (*Tips them toward CARLOTTA*) Talisman roses.

CARLOTTA. Exquisite!

MILLICENT. (*Picking up the card envelope*) It's my favorite rose. (*Reads the card*) From the Ferncliffes. (*Patronizingly*) Lord and Lady Ferncliffe. How thoughtful of them!

CARLOTTA. Not Bunny! Flowers from Bunny!

MILLICENT. Bunny?

CARLOTTA. Bunny Ferncliffe. All his friends call him Bunny. He *does* look like a rabbit.

MILLICENT. (*A trifle dashed*) Why—I didn't know you knew them.

CARLOTTA. To think of Bunny loosening up for flowers! Why, nobody in London will believe it. Once he dropped a shilling down the grating and he made them dig up Piccadilly to get it.

(GUSTAVE *enters R. carrying a tray with the whiskey and soda. Down his right cheek and over his left eye are two very noticeable strips of adhesive tape. To offset this his bearing is more*



*magnificent than usual. Goes to table L. of sofa. Puts tray on table.)*

MILLICENT. Dora, put some water in that tall vase. *(Hands her the flowers)* And—let me see—I think they'd look well on the console in the dining room.

DORA. Yes, ma'am. *(Goes to the table up c. Places the box on the table for the moment; picks up the tall vase.)*

MILLICENT. Why, Gustave! What's happened to your face! *(DORA, arrested by the question, stands nervously awaiting its outcome. At MILLICENT'S tone, CARLOTTA, too, glances with curiosity at GUSTAVE'S face.)*

CARLOTTA. Why, Gustave! It's my Gustave! Gustave, when in the world did— He was my waiter for weeks at the Bauer-au-lac in Lucerne. When was it, Gustave? Two winters ago? No—three.

GUSTAVE. *(With an uncomfortable little cough)* Ah—yes, madam.

MILLICENT. How interesting!

CARLOTTA. How is your darling wife and those lovely children? *(Turns to MILLICENT)* He's got three of the most— Have you seen them? And his wife— *(The vase drops from DORA'S hands with a thud.)*

MILLICENT. *(Reprovingly)* Dora!

DORA. *(Crushed)* Excuse me—madam. *(She rushes blindly out R.)*

MILLICENT. Why, what's the matter with her? Gustave, see if anything's the matter.

GUSTAVE. Yes, madam. *(He picks up vase; starts to go R.)*

CARLOTTA. Gustave! Bringing those Continental customs over here! *(OLIVER enters R.)*

GUSTAVE. Oh, no, madam! (*Exits R.*)

OLIVER. (*Throws a little puzzled backward glance over his shoulder, having passed the fleeing DORA in the hall. Sees CARLOTTA. Comes to her*) Why, Carlotta! (*To MILLICENT*) Hello, dear.

MILLICENT. Hello, darling.

CARLOTTA. Well, I've found out about you Big Business Men. Leave your offices at four. What have you been up to for the last two hours?

OLIVER. (*Wanly*) All sorts of mischief.

MILLICENT. (*Goes to OLIVER*) Darling, you're all mussy. Look at your tie! Been playing squash?

OLIVER. No. No.

MILLICENT. Why don't you try to get a rest before dinner? Oh, Carlotta wants to talk to you.

CARLOTTA. (*Pouring herself a drink, and mixing it*) I shan't be a minute, Oliver dear.

MILLICENT. I'll be tactful and vanish. (*Exits L. OLIVER goes to the tray; pours himself a stiff drink; takes it.*)

CARLOTTA. (*Watching this in some surprise*) Mm! Hard day at the office, h'm? I tried to get you there. Did they tell you?

OLIVER. (*Crosses L.*) No. I left early.

CARLOTTA. Then I called up here. They said you'd be in about six. So I took a chance.

OLIVER. What's the matter? Something wrong?

CARLOTTA. Oliver, ducky, you won't be cross with Carlotta, will you? I wanted to ask you first, and I told him, but the man said it had to be today—there was some sort of meeting—and you weren't at your office, so I went ahead. And then I got sort of worried about it—

OLIVER. What are you trying to tell me?

CARLOTTA. Well—Oliver sweet, poor Carlotta was so stony, and it was such a chance—(*In a rush*)—so I sold my Jordan stock. I hope you don't mind.

OLIVER. (*A moment of blank pause. Then OLI-*

VER'S *mind begins to work, rapidly*) Who'd you sell it to?

CARLOTTA. (*Fumbling in her handbag*) His name was—he was really quite a sweet fellow—such a charming manner—(*Fishes out the check; scans it*) Mr. Baldrige—James K. Baldrige.

OLIVER. What'd he look like?

CARLOTTA. Well, do you know, he was really quite handsome. He looked a good deal like Reggie Traymore—you know—around the eyes. You must remember Reggie. (*OLIVER strides quickly to the desk. Takes notebook out of pocket; feverishly finding his number.*) I hope I didn't do wrong. I did try to reach you. I called the office three times. (*OLIVER starts to dial his number, his gestures quick and terribly decisive. CARLOTTA talks as he dials.*) You said you didn't want to buy it yourself, and there was this nice Mr. Bainbridge with all that beautiful money right in his hand. It's certified.

OLIVER. (*Into the phone*) Is Mr. Kingsberry home? Mr. Oliver Jordan.

CARLOTTA. Oh, dear, you *are* cross with me. I'm just devastated. I never would have done it. I would have gone barefoot and hungry rather than—

OLIVER. (*Sharply into the phone*) Hello! Is that you, Kingsberry? This is Jordan. Sorry to bother you at home. (*A deep breath. A hand passes over his head. He pulls himself together, reaches for the properly self-controlled opening*) Did you—uh—have the Satterlee sisters sold their Jordan stock? You sold it this afternoon. May I ask who bought it? Whitestone? Whitestone. Thank you. Thank you very much! (*Hangs up. Stays a moment, motionless.*)

CARLOTTA. (*Rises. A little uncomfortably*) Well, I'll be trotting along. I'm seeing you at dinner. (*Raises her voice*) Goodbye, Millicent.

MILLICENT. (*Off L.*) Goodbye.

OLIVER. What? —Oh—I'll take you downstairs, Carlotta. (*The TELEPHONE rings. OLIVER makes a half turn.*)

CARLOTTA. Oh, don't bother. (*MILLICENT appears from L.*) Toodle-oo!

MILLICENT. (*On the phone ring, speaks, enters*) I'll go, dear. It's probably for me. See you later, Carlotta.

CARLOTTA. (*To MILLICENT*) Goodbye— (*Going toward R. door, with OLIVER*) Now, Oliver, you shouldn't take business so seriously. Smile! Don't be so American. Really you never used to be— (*They are gone.*)

MILLICENT. (*At the telephone*) Yes? This is Mrs. Jordan. Lord Ferncliffe's secretary? Yes. Yes? What's that! But you must be— But they can't. (*In an absolute frenzy*) But they *can't* go to Florida! They're coming here to dinner. But it's not possible. I'm giving the dinner *for* them. They've gone! When? But people don't *do* things like that! But letting me know at this hour— I don't care how sudden it was, you should have let— (*PAULA JORDAN enters R. She is wearing the costume in which we have seen her at LARRY RENAULT'S apartment. She takes off her hat with a little gesture of something like defiance. Stands, tense, waiting for her mother to finish at the telephone*) Well, all I can say is, I never heard of such a thing in my life! Never! (*Bangs the receiver on the hook.*)

PAULA. (*Coming C.*) Mother, I want to talk to you!

MILLICENT. What!

PAULA. It's about Ernest and me! I want to talk to you! I can't—

MILLICENT. (*Pacing up and down*) Paula, don't bother me now! For pity's sake, don't bother me! I don't want to listen to your silly little—

PAULA. But, Mother, you don't understand! This is terribly important! Ernest— (*WARN Curtain.*)

MILLCENT. Paula, shut up! Shut up, I tell you! (*Her hand pressed to her head*) Let me think! (*PAULA is stunned into momentary silence by her mother's tone and words. MILLCENT stands, seething, her thoughts concentrated on her own problem. Into this brief pause OLIVER enters quietly R. to front of sofa.*)

OLIVER. Millicent, dear, do you mind if I don't go to the theatre? I'm feeling pretty rotten. If I could just go to bed—

MILLCENT. (*As though unable to believe her ears*) What's that you're saying?

OLIVER. I say, I'm feeling pretty rotten—(*His hand on his chest*)—and I'm up against a business thing that—

PAULA. (*Sympathetically*) Oh, Dad, I'm— (*Crossing to him.*)

MILLCENT. (*In mounting hysteria*) Business thing! At a time like this you talk about a business thing! And feeling rotten. This is a nice time for you to say you're feeling rotten! You come to me with your—(*Turning to PAULA*)—and you, whimpering about Ernest! Some little lovers' quarrel! I'm expected to listen to Ernest and business and headaches when I'm half out of my mind! Do you know what's happened to *me*! I've had the most hellish day that anybody ever had! No aspic for dinner—and that Vance woman coming in—and Gustave looking like a prize-fighter—and sending for crab meat—*crab meat*—and now, on top of everything, do you know what's happened! (*Quivering breath of rage and bafflement as she prepares to launch her final thrust*) The Ferncliffes aren't coming to dinner! They call up at this hour, those miserable cockneys—they call up and say they've gone to Florida! Florida! And who can I get at this

hour! Nobody! I've only got eight people! Eight people isn't a dinner. Who can I get? And you come to me with your idiotic little— *I'm* the one who ought to be in bed! I'm the one who's in trouble! Trouble! You don't know what trouble is— either one of you! (*Storms out of the room to L. OLIVER and PAULA stand in silence, their eyes following her.*)

CURTAIN.



## ACT THREE

### SCENE I

KITTY PACKARD'S bedroom. *The time is 7:30.*

DAN and KITTY PACKARD are dressing for the JORDANS' dinner. KITTY is at her dressing table. DAN is in his room L. The door is open. The conversation is going on between the two as they dress.

KITTY'S dressing table is littered with bottles, jars, atomizers, brushes, toilette articles. Her throat and arms are bare, as she is clad in a chemise and dressing gown. On her feet are mules. She is almost at the point where her dress may be carefully slipped over her head. It is plain that she has spent much time on the details of her toilette. She is marcelled, facialed, manicured, massaged, within an inch of her life.

Carefully spread out on the bed is the dress she is to wear at dinner. Vivid satin evening slippers, to be worn with her gown, stand near the chair, side by side.

At the rise of the curtain, KITTY is giving to her face those last detailed touches—mascara, lipstick, eyebrow pencil. She uses a hand mirror for these operations, but occasionally glances in the larger mirror of the dressing table, in order to get the full effect of her efforts.

From the adjoining room comes DAN'S cheer-

*ful whistle while dressing. After a moment he appears briefly in the doorway. He, too, is only half dressed for the evening. He has on the trousers of his evening clothes, a shirt, patent leather shoes, collar. White dress-suspenders dangle behind him. His hair is rumpled. He is wiping his hands on a towel, having just finished shaving.*

PACKARD. (*As he pops in*) How you coming, Kitten? (KITTY, *intent on darkening her eyelashes with mascara, does not answer*) Huh? How you coming?

KITTY. (*Turns, furious, her pencil poised*) I've told you a million times not to talk to me when I'm doing my lashes.

PACKARD. O.K. Then don't talk to me when I'm shaving. (*He disappears into his bedroom. Immediately TINA enters R. She is carrying a small florist's box. From the depths of this she is holding up, for her own admiration, a large cluster of orchids.*)

TINA. I think these are the handsomest ones you ever bought.

KITTY. (*Turning her glare upon TINA*) Will you take those back? I'll tell you when I want 'em.

TINA. Yes'm. (*Goes out R. quickly.*)

KITTY. (*Loudly, after TINA has disappeared*) Put 'em back in the icebox, you nitwit! (*Resumes her carefully detailed work with the eye pencil. DAN, in the adjoining room, now bursts into loud song. He is in high spirits. The sound enrages KITTY, who suspends her work an instant to glare in the direction of the voice. The song, after its first height, drops a little as DAN reappears at L. door. He is putting on his tie. Crosses to KITTY.*)

PACKARD. Yes, sir, I'd give a thousand bucks to see Jordan's face when he walks into that meeting

Monday. There'll be Whitestone and Baldridge each with a big hunk of stock in their fists, and when they begin to count noses—(*A gesture and a whistle indicating that all is over*)—little Oliver can go buy himself a rowboat and start all over again.

KITTY. I guess this is the last time we'll be invited there to dinner. We'd better eat a good one.

PACKARD. How do you mean?

KITTY. He'll be pretty sore, won't he, when he finds out you double-crossed him?

PACKARD. Huh? Jordan'll never know. Didn't I tell you? I stick in Whitestone for president, Baldridge is the treasurer; my name never appears. We can go there to dinner as long as they've got anything to eat. (*TINA enters R. She is carrying, suspended from its hanger, a magnificent ermine evening wrap. This she places over the back of the chair.*)

KITTY. You're so smart you're going to land in jail some day. Tina, where the hell are my slippers? (*TINA scrambles hastily for the slippers at chair up C.; dashes back, kneels at KITTY'S feet, removes the mules, puts on the slippers. KITTY is trying on her bracelets, and is holding up her arm to get the effect of the first two or three.*)

PACKARD. Well, they got to go some to get Dan Packard. They've been laying for me ever since the old Montana days. But I got hold of the Copperhead, and I got the Big Emma, and I came to New York and put it over on 'em, and who's got bigger bracelets than you've got?

KITTY. (*To TINA*) Oo! Look out, will you? What you trying to do? Slice my heel off!

PACKARD. And I'm just beginning, Tootsie. Just beginning. Remember what I told you last week?

KITTY. (*Turning back to her dressing table*) I don't remember what you told me a minute ago. (*TINA goes out R.*)

PACKARD. Washington. Don't you remember that? How'd you like to be a Cabinet member's wife, mingling with all the other Cabinet members' wives, and Senators' wives and Ambassadors', and even the President's wife? What'd you think of that? Huh!

KITTY. Nerts!

PACKARD. You don't know what you're talking about. There isn't a woman living wouldn't break her neck to get in with that bunch.

KITTY. (*With definite defiance in her tone*) Yeah! You don't drag me down to that graveyard. I've seen their pictures in the papers—those girlies. A lot of sour-faced frumps with last year's clothes on. Giving medals to Girl Scouts, and rolling Easter eggs on the White House lawn. A hell of a lot of fun I'd have! You go live in Washington. I can have a good time right here.

PACKARD. Listen, Stupid, if I get this appointment, I'm going to Washington. And if I go to Washington you're going, too. Understand!

KITTY. (*Rising slowly*) Do you mean you're really going to get it?

PACKARD. You're right, I am!

KITTY. (*At bay*) I won't go!

PACKARD. Oh, yes, you will!

KITTY. I will not! I won't go 'way from New York! All my friends are in New York!

PACKARD. You'll go if I go!

KITTY. Oh, no, I won't! You can't boss me around! I can yell just as loud as you can.

PACKARD. (*A snarl of rage*) Oh-h-h-h! (*Plunges off L.* KITTY stands, victorious, glaring after him. She picks up the buffer from her dressing table, bur-nishes her nails with vicious energy, glares again after him, seats herself before her mirror, drops the buffer with a little clatter. Sits, doing nothing,

*thinking a way out of her situation. DAN re-enters L., buttoning his vest. One finger pointing menacingly, he gestures toward KITTY. KITTY, in queenly contempt following her victory, picks up her hair-brush, ignoring DAN. Begins to smooth her hair. DAN stands at threshold a second)* You've been acting damn funny lately, my fine lady. And I'm getting good and sick of it.

KITTY. Yeah? And so what?

PACKARD. I'll tell you what. I'm the works around here. I pay the bills. And you take your orders from me. *(Crosses to C.)*

KITTY. *(Rising, brush hanging idle in her hand)* Who do you think you're talking to? That first wife of yours out in Montana?

PACKARD. You leave her out of this!

KITTY. *(Continuing)* That poor mealy-faced thing, with her flat chest, that never had the guts to talk up to you!

PACKARD. Shut up, I tell you!

KITTY. *(Not stopping. Crossing to him)* Washing out your greasy overalls, cooking and slaving for you in some lousy mining shack! No wonder she died!

PACKARD. God damn you!

KITTY. *(Still continuing. Gesticulating with the hair brush)* Well, you're not going to get me that way! You're not going to step on my face to get where you want to go—you big windbag! *(Turns away from him; drops her brush among the bottles and jars on the dressing table.)*

PACKARD. Why, you cheap little piece of scum! I've got a good notion to drop you right back where

I picked you up, in the check room of the Hottentot Club, or whatever the dirty joint was.

KITTY. Oh, no, you won't!

PACKARD. (*Continuing*) And then you can go home and live with your sweet-smelling family, back of the railroad tracks in Passaic. That drunken bum of a father and your jail-bird brother that I'm always coming through for. The next time he can go to the pen, and I'll see that he gets there. } (*Together*)

KITTY. (*Crossing to him*) You'll be there ahead of him—you big crook!

PACKARD. And get this! If that sniveling, money-grubbing mother of yours comes whining around my office once more, I'm going to give orders to have her thrown the hell out of there and right down sixty flights of stairs, so help me God! (*TINA has entered R. as DAN is almost at the end of this speech. In her hand is KITTY's evening bag, jeweled and metallic, and containing KITTY's powder compact, lipstick, cigarette case, etc. Finding herself in the midst of a storm, she hesitates briefly. DAN, on his last words, and coincident with TINA's entrance, snatches the bag from TINA's hand, dashes it to the floor, gives TINA a shove that sends her spinning out of the room R.*)

KITTY. (*White with rage*) You pick that up!

PACKARD. Pick it up yourself!

KITTY. You pick that up! (*For answer DAN gives the bag a violent kick, sending it into a corner of the room. Beside herself*) Bracelets, eh? (*She takes off a three-inch jeweled band, drops it onto the floor, and kicks it viciously across the room*) You think if you give me a bracelet— Why do you give 'em to me? Because you've put over one of your dirty deals and want me to lug these around to show what a big



guy you are! You don't do it to make *me* feel good; it's for *you*!

PACKARD. Oh, it is, is it! What about this place and all these clothes and fur coats and automobiles? Go any place you want to, money to throw away! There ain't a wife in the world got it softer than you have! I picked you up out of the gutter, and this is the thanks I get!

KITTY. Thanks for what? Dressing me up like a plush horse and leaving me to sit alone, day after day and night after night! You never take me anywheres! Always playing poker and eating dinner with your men friends—or say you are.

PACKARD. That's a nice crack.

KITTY. You never think about me, or do any of the nice little things that women like—you never sent me a flower in your life! When I want to wear flowers I got to go out and buy 'em! (*With a gesture toward R. door where TINA has lately stood with the orchids*) What woman wants to buy theirself flowers? You never sit and talk to me, or ask me what I've been doing, or anything!

PACKARD. Who cares what you do? Do anything you like—I ain't stopping you!

KITTY. You bet you ain't! You think I sit home all day looking at bracelets! Hah! Of all the dumb bunnies! What do you think I'm doing while you're pulling your crooked deals? Just waiting for Daddy to come home?

PACKARD. What're you driving at, you little—

KITTY. You think you're the only man I know—you great big noise! Well, you aren't! See! There's somebody that just knowing him has made me realize what a stuffed shirt you are!

PACKARD. Why, you—you—

KITTY. You don't like that, do you, Mr. Cabinet Member? Somebody *else* put over a deal.

PACKARD. Do you mean to tell me you've been putting it over on me with some man?

KITTY. *(She is in for it now. Means to go through with it)* Yes! And what're you going to do about it, you big gas-bag?

PACKARD. *(Drawing the full breath of the outraged male)* Who is it?

KITTY. *(A purr of pure malice)* Don't you wish you knew?

PACKARD. *(Seizes her wrist. KITTY screams)* Tell me who it is!

KITTY. I won't!

PACKARD. Tell me, or I'll break every bone in your body!

KITTY. I won't! You can kill me, and I won't!

PACKARD. I'll find out. *(Drops her wrist)* Tina! Tina!

KITTY. She don't know. *(There is a moment during which the two stand silent, waiting for the appearance of TINA. There comes slowly into the R. doorway and a step or two into the room a TINA who, in spite of the expression of wondering innocence on her face, has clearly been eavesdropping. She comes forward so that she stands between the two silent figures.)*

PACKARD. Who's been coming to this house?

TINA. Huh?

KITTY. You don't know, do you, } *(Together)*  
Tina?

PACKARD. Shut your face, you slut! *(Turns again to TINA)* You know, and you're going to tell. What man's been coming to this house?

TINA. *(A frantic shake of the head)* I ain't seen nobody.

PACKARD. *(Grasps her shoulder. Gives her a little shake)* Yes, you have! Come on! Who's been here? Who was here last week? Who was here when I went to Washington?

TINA. Nobody. Nobody—only the doctor.

PACKARD. No—no! I don't mean that. What man's been coming here behind my back?

TINA. I ain't seen a soul.

KITTY. Hah! What did I tell you?

PACKARD. (*Looks at her as though trying to find a way of worming the truth out of her. Decides it is hopeless. Gives her a push toward the R. door.*

TINA *exits.*) Get the hell out of here! (KITTY *stands waiting to see what turn events will take.*

PACKARD *paces a step this way and that. Wheels suddenly*) I'll divorce you. That's what I'll do. I'll divorce you, and you won't get a cent. That's the law for what you've done.

KITTY. You can't prove anything. You've got to prove it first.

PACKARD. I'll prove it. I'll get detectives to prove it. They'll track him down. I'd like to get hold of that guy just once. How I'd like to get my fingers around his neck. And I will, too. I'll get him! I'll kill *him*, and I'll throw you out like an alley cat.

KITTY. Yeah? You'll throw me out. Well, before you throw me out you'd better think twice. Because me, I don't have to get detectives to prove what I've got on you. (*WARN Dim Out.*)

PACKARD. You've got nothing on me!

KITTY. No? So you want to go to Washington, do you? And be a big shot, and tell the President where to get off? You want to go in politics. (*Her tone becomes savage*) Well, I know about politics. And I know all about the crooked deals you bragged about. God knows I was bored stiff—but I was listening. Stealing from Delehanty, and the Thompson business, and gyping old man Clarke, and now this Jordan thing. Skinning him out of his eye-teeth. When I tell about those it'll raise a pretty stink! Politics! You couldn't get into politics. You

couldn't get in anywhere. You couldn't get into the men's room at the Astor!

PACKARD. You snake you! You poisonous little rattlesnake. I'm through with you. I've got to go to that dinner, but after tonight we're through. And I wouldn't go there with you, except that meeting Ferncliffe is more important to me than you are. I'm clearing out tonight, get me? Tomorrow I send for my clothes. And you can sit here and get flowers from your soulmate. We're through. (PACKARD stalks off L. Slams the door.)

KITTY. (*Stands looking sullenly after him. Then she drifts over to her dressing-table, drops into the chair, regains a measure of composure, picks up her powder-puff, dabs at her face with little angry dabs, glances down at her right arm, and misses the absent bracelet*) Tina! Tina!

TINA. (*Enters R., too promptly*) Yes'm.

KITTY. (*Her tone strangely dulcet*) Tina, would you mind picking up that bracelet? It fell.

TINA. (*Glancing around, sees it; goes to it; picks it up; looks at it admiringly as she brings it to KITTY. She holds it too long, so that KITTY reaches toward it. But TINA, instead of relinquishing it, brings it closer to her own gaze*) My, it's pretty, ain't it?

KITTY. (*A little uneasily*) Give it to me.

TINA. Look—it just fits me.

KITTY. Give it here, will you!

TINA. You've got so many bracelets, I don't see how you can use 'em all.

KITTY. What are you driving at?

TINA. (*Looking down at it, then up at KITTY with a hard and meaningful eye*) Nothing. Only I thought with you having so many, maybe you might want to give me one.

KITTY. Here, powder my back, will you? (*Hands*

*her the powder-puff. Quickly TINA picks up the powder-puff; begins busily to powder KITTY'S back, the bracelet still in her left hand.)*

## THE LIGHTS DIM OUT

### ACT THREE

#### SCENE II

LARRY RENAULT'S apartment in the Hotel Versailles.  
*It is a quarter to eight.*

*The room is in considerable disorder—a disorder reflecting the befuddled mind and uncoordinated movements of its occupant. The garments in which we have last seen LARRY are now strewn over the room—his trousers on the floor near the bedroom, his shirt seen on the floor of the bedroom, his shoes in widely separated spots. The black moire dressing-gown is in a heap on the floor c. His evening topcoat, folded so as to reveal the glistening black silk lining, is also flung over the sofa. Two sections of the evening paper are thrown about the room.*

*The whiskey bottle, now empty, is on the table by the sofa, and near it an overturned glass.*

*The cushions on sofa and chairs are awry, and one of them has fallen to the floor. The drapes on the window are drawn.*

(LARRY RENAULT himself, in full evening dress—tails, white waistcoat, white tie, silk hat on the side of his head—is walking up and down the room impatiently. About his walk is a sort of wavering uncertainty that denotes a degree of

*intoxication. Pushes up his left sleeve an inch or two to look at his wrist watch; sees that it is not there; remembers why. Makes for the telephone to ascertain the time.)*

LARRY. (*His speech is slightly slurred*) Hello!—Hello!—What time is it?—Time—time! Time!—Seven forty-five. Thanks. (*Hangs up noisily. Paces the room with increased impatience. Encounters a pillow on the floor; kicks it savagely so that it lands near the French window R.C. As he kicks pillow, the TELEPHONE rings. Eagerly he removes the receiver*) Hello! Yes, this is Mr. Renault— Yes, I got it— Listen, my good fellow. I'm not accustomed to being dunned for hotel bills. I'm a very busy man—my secretary usually attends to those things—but he's in California, at the moment. You'll get your money— You'll get it when it suits my convenience. (*Hangs up. The sound of the door BUZZER comes immediately. He wheels in the direction of R. door. Shouts*) Come in!

(MAX KANE comes nimbly into the room, with JO STENGEL following slowly some paces behind him. JO STENGEL is about sixty; his hair is well grayed; he is kindly looking; time has refined his features; his eyes are shrewd, his manner quiet; yet there is about him the indefinable air of the showman.)

MAX. Liberty Hall, eh?

LARRY. Where the hell have you been! I told you I was— (MAX warns him with a gesture of the right hand as, with the left, he impressively ushers in JO STENGEL.)

MAX. I brought up Mr. Stengel, Larry. (STENGEL enters.) Meet Larry Renault, Mr. Stengel.



LARRY. (*A complete change of manner*) Oh—how are you, Mr. Stengel?

STENGEL. (*They shake hands*) Mr. Renault.

LARRY. Well, this is quite an occasion. (STENGEL glances at MAX.) Meeting of two celebrities. We ought to have the newsreel men here. (MAX is removing his coat.)

STENGEL. Yes. (*His eye takes in LARRY'S costume, including the high hat, which is still on his head*) Of course, I didn't realize it was a full dress affair. I just came as I was.

MAX. (*Appreciates this with a laugh which breaks off rather sharply as his quick eye spots the empty whiskey bottle. He edges unobtrusively toward it, talking as he goes, with a fine air of carelessness*) Mr. Renault's got a date with some of his Park Avenue friends. (*Picks dressing gown from floor; puts it on sofa; furtively picks up the bottle, shielding it behind his back; gets rid of it behind the convenient sofa*) These big picture boys, they're pretty social. (*Having accomplished his purpose, he turns upon the other two a radiantly glassy smile.*)

STENGEL. Yes. I've heard.

LARRY. They'll wait. Sit down, Mr. Stengel. Don't you want to take your coat off?

MAX. (*Trots hastily over to STENGEL*) Sure he does. Take your coat off, Mr. Stengel.

STENGEL. (*Sitting*) Well, no—I've only got a minute. I got a classy dinner date too—I got to meet a hamburger, with onions, at Dinty Moore's. (STENGEL safely seated, chair R.C., MAX stands upstage, between them. LARRY RENAULT stays on his feet, pacing as he talks. MAX laughs his sycophantic laugh.)

LARRY. I don't care much for those chop-house places. Matter of fact, there isn't a decent restaurant in New York. (*A look from STENGEL to MAX. LARRY'S drunkenness is apparent*) Take this hotel—

class of people they've got, you'd think—but it's terrible. I'm not going to eat here any more.

STENGEL. You don't say?

LARRY. (*Warming to the subject*) You really have to go to Europe for good cooking. Paris! There's a little place on the Left Bank—nobody knows about it. The way they cook kidneys—their rognons aux beurre are absolutely marvelous! (*Wafts a kiss into the air, very Gallic, in memory of that delectable meal*) But the most exquisite food I ever ate was—(*To STENGEL*)—guess where?

STENGEL. (*Very promptly*) I give up.

LARRY. A little place called Ming Chow's, in Peking. Better than when I dined with the Emperor—I want to tell you about that, some time.

STENGEL. Maybe. Some other time. (*Starts to rise; gives up as LARRY continues; sinks back into chair.*)

LARRY. Of course, most of the time, I carried my own chef. That's really the only way to travel.

STENGEL. (*Rising*) Well, look, Mr. Renault, I haven't got an awful lot of time—

MAX. Yeah, Larry. Suppose we get down to brass tacks.

LARRY. All right, my good fellow— Well, Stengel, you're going to produce this play, h'm? And you want me to act in it?

STENGEL. (*A bit taken aback*) Well, I— (*His alarmed eye goes to MAX.*)

MAX. (*Hurriedly*) This is just getting acquainted, Larry. (*With his spurious good-nature, to STENGEL*) You see, he's crazy to play the part.

LARRY. Just a minute! Let's get this straight. (*Hurling his silk hat upstage*) I understood from Mr. Kane, here, that you wanted to know if I would be willing to portray the beach-comber in this thing.

STENGEL. Wait a minute! Not so fast, there.

MAX. (*Comes quickly between the two, breaking*

*in*) Now, now! What's the difference which one is—he wants to *do it*—and you *want* him to do it—so what's the difference—

LARRY. A lot of difference.

MAX. Now, Larry!

LARRY. In the first place, if I decide to accept this part—and I don't say I will—it'll have to be built up.

MAX. There's the actor for you! No matter how good the part is, right away they want it built up.

STENGEL. Built up! The fella's got one scene, and they find him dead on the beach. This ain't a spiritualism play.

LARRY. No? Well, you're forgetting one thing, Stengel. Don't forget I'm Larry Renault.

MAX. Larry, for God's sake!

LARRY. Shut up! Now listen, Stengel. I'm a Name, and I know it. And so do you. And I'm not going to go on and play second fiddle to any cheap English ham.

MAX. (*In a frantic half-whisper*) Larry!

LARRY. (*Waving MAX away*) Eight thousand a week—that's what I got. And I was going to get ten—only the talkies came in. So don't think you're doing me a favor, giving me a part in your ratty little play—because I'm doing *you* one. (*MAX, desperate, turns away.*)

STENGEL. I think maybe we're keeping you from your dinner, Mr. Renault. (*Turns to depart.*)

MAX. (*Over to STENGEL*) Listen, Jo, he doesn't mean anything—he just means—

LARRY. Oh, yes, I do. And just because it's Mr. Jo Stengel doesn't mean a thing to me. I'm still good. I'm better than I ever was. See that! (*Runs his hands down his slim flanks*) And that! (*Indicates the famous profile*) Give me the right part and you'll have the biggest hit that even Mr. Jo Stengel ever produced.

STENGEL. (*Quietly and conclusively*) Good night, Mr. Renault.

MAX. Listen, Jo—!

LARRY. Oh, I see. You're doing a second-rate show. You don't want real artists. (STENGEL *starts to go*. LARRY *crosses to him*) Well, your English ham will give you what you want. (*Grabs his arm*) Listen to me, old-timer. I'm drunk, and I know I'm drunk.

MAX. Larry—!

LARRY. But I know what I'm saying. (STENGEL *breaks from LARRY'S grasp*.)

MAX. (*Whirling LARRY around*) For God's sake, Larry!

STENGEL. It's all right, Max. I'll see you tomorrow.

MAX. I'll take you to the elevator. (STENGEL *exits R.*, followed by MAX.)

LARRY. (*Who has continued to talk through the OTHERS' speeches*) I wouldn't be in your rotten show! I didn't come to your office, did I! Not Larry Renault! You came to see me. And d'you know why! Because I'm an important artist, and you're a cheap pushcart producer! (*Turns away, then back to R. door, and leans through the door to shout his final insult*) Pushcart! (*For a second LARRY hangs precariously in the doorway, glaring after the departing figures down the hall. Sways a little, then lurches back into the room, coming to a wavering halt at about the middle. He is muttering a little to himself. As MAX re-enters, LARRY is looking toward the door. MAX comes in swiftly; slams the door behind him; fixes LARRY with an eye of utter fury. There is a moment's silence as the two MEN stare at each other.*)

MAX. You—drunken—fool! Ha! I bring him up here! I go down on my hands and knees to do it. And you!—God, I can't believe it! I can't believe

that any man— (*Mutters "God damn fool" under his breath as he turns to go*) Well, that's that! (*Snatches up his coat from the chair.*)

LARRY. (*As MAX goes toward R. door*) Just a minute! I've got something to say to you, too! Telling him I was crazy to play that part! Yessing him all over the lot! You know what I think! It's you got the play away from Baumann and gave it to Stengel! It's you did me out of the part! You double-dealing Kike! You're in with the managers! You've been taking my money and working for them!

MAX. (*Very low—in a cruel level tone*) You don't say! Working for the managers, eh? And taking your money? Me! That you're into for five hundred bucks—in touches. All right. If you think I've been lying to you all this time, you're going to get the truth now. (*A deprecatory wave of the hand from LARRY; a sneering sound and a half turn away*) Renault, you're through.

LARRY. (*Turns slowly toward him*) Get out of here.

MAX. I'll get out. And stay out. But get this first. (*Crossing over to LARRY*) I never worked so hard to put anybody over as I did you. You think I told you all the things I tried! No. Because I couldn't come to you and tell you what they said. I was too sorry for you.

LARRY. (*A little fearfully*) Sorry for me!

MAX. Vaudeville! Why, every time I walked into the booking office they leaned back and roared. Called me "Maxie, the grave-snatcher." And the radio—remember I told you I hadn't seen the right fellow! I saw him. Only he saw me first. Last night I sent a wire to Hollywood. I knew it was no use, but I sent it anyway. Do you want to see the answer? (*Drawing it out of his pocket.*)

LARRY. (*Backing away, as though from something dreadful*) No.

MAX. (*Reads*) "When we are in the market for extras we will let you know." (*Crushes the telegram into a ball; throws it at LARRY'S feet.*)

LARRY. Trying to throw a scare into me.

MAX. No. I'm just telling you the truth. What the hell, you never were an actor, but you did have looks. Well, they're gone. And you don't have to take my word for it. Look in the mirror. They don't lie. Take a good look. (*Comes closer to him, while LARRY retreats*) Look at these pouches under your eyes. Take a look at those creases. You got wattles under your chin. (*His taunting hand is up, pointing at this, at that. LARRY slaps it down like a frightened child.*) You sag like an old woman. (*A gesture indicates the face of the man before him*) Get a load of yourself. What's the matter? Afraid? You ain't seen nothin' yet. Wait till you start tramp-ing round looking for a job. No agent'll handle you. Wait till you start sitting in ante-rooms, hours and hours. Giving your name to office boys who never heard of you. You're through, Renault. You're through in pictures, and plays, and vaudeville and radio and everything! You're a corpse, and you don't know it. Go get yourself buried. (*Exits R., closing the door decisively behind him.*)

(*LARRY stands as though dazed, swaying a little. He passes a hand over his head. He looks about the room vaguely. His eye falls on the wall-mirror. He lunges swiftly toward it; stands before it, peering intently at the reflection of his own face. Tries to smooth away with his fingers the bags under his chin and beneath his eyes. There they are. He turns away with something like a shudder. He advances heavily a step or two; stands. With his handkerchief he wipes the cold sweat from beneath his chin, from his upper lip, from his clammy brow. He espies the crumpled tele-*



*gram on the floor. Lunges toward that; picks it up; smooths it. A quick look. Throws it down, as though sickened. A noisy RAPPING of knuckles on R. door. As LARRY half turns toward the sound EDDIE, the bellboy, enters. He is carrying the silver frame, wrapped in its newspaper, an untidy bundle. EDDIE's walk is a scuffling swagger that carries with it unmistakable disrespect. He tosses his bundle onto the first chair handy. At the same time he plunges his hand in his pocket; brings out the cuff links, which he throws on the table.)*

EDDIE. They don't want this junk. They wouldn't give me nothing on it.

LARRY. (*Dazedly, crossing to EDDIE*) What?—Why—that's a silver frame! Those links are solid platinum.

EDDIE. All right—you take 'em. I lugged 'em to every pawnshop on Sixth Avenue. (*Starts to slouch out of the room.*)

LARRY. You little liar! You never took them any place!

EDDIE. (*Turns, his expression ugly*) Say! Who are you calling liar? What do I get out of all this—you down-and-out ham?

LARRY. You filthy little rat, how dare you talk to me like that?

EDDIE. (*Contemptuously*) O.K.! (*A wave of the hand. He turns to leave.*)

LARRY. No, no! Wait! I didn't mean that. I didn't mean to call you that. I'm sorry. Listen! I've got to have some liquor. I'm sick. You lay it out for me, and I'll pay it back to you.

EDDIE. What kind of a sucker do you think I am?

LARRY. No, no! I've got to have it! I've got to! I'll pay you back. I'll pay you back tomorrow.

EDDIE. You won't be here tomorrow.

LARRY. What?

EDDIE. Aw, boloney! (*He goes out. Closes R. door.*)

(*LARRY stands. Then, desperate for a drink, he searches the corner for the bottle. He finds it where MAX has tucked it behind the couch; eagerly holds it up in the hope of finding just a mouthful remaining. There is nothing. He drops the bottle to the floor. The sound of the door BUZZER. LARRY wheels in terror.*)

LARRY. Who's that!

(*The sound of a key in the lock. FITCH, the hotel manager, and HATFIELD, the assistant manager, come into the room. FITCH, in his business suit and eyeglasses, is the solid man of affairs. HATFIELD, garbed in the assistant's uniform of cut-away and striped trousers, defers to his superior. HATFIELD carries a sheaf of cards, one for each floor, on which are specified the hotel rooms and their occupants. In the other hand is a pencil. The two advance well into the room, as though taking possession, though their manner is, to the end, polite.*)

FITCH. How do you do, Mr. Renault? I haven't had the pleasure of meeting you before. Though you've been with us for some time. I'm Mr. Fitch, the Manager.

LARRY. (*Vaguely*) Oh, yes.

FITCH. I believe you know my assistant, Mr. Hatfield?

LARRY. (*Wets his lips*) Yes.

FITCH. (*A little apologetic laugh*) Mr. Renault, we find ourselves in an awkward predicament. We've just had a communication from some very old clients

of ours—Mr. and Mrs. Sherman Montgomery—possibly you know them. They've been making this their home for many years—every winter. And have always occupied this particular suite. They say it's like home to them. Now, we've just been notified that they're coming in tomorrow. Tomorrow—is that right, Mr. Hatfield?

HATFIELD. Yes, sir. Tomorrow afternoon.

FITCH. Well, there you are. Under the circumstances I am afraid we must ask you for these rooms.

LARRY. Oh! Well—what other rooms have you got for me?

FITCH. That's just the trouble. We're terribly full up. The Horse Show, and—Mr. Hatfield, is there any place we can put Mr. Renault?

HATFIELD. (*A great show of consulting his slips*) I'm—afraid—not, Mr. Fitch. (*A little embarrassed laugh*) It looks as though everything is taken.

FITCH. (*Echoes HATFIELD's laugh*) I'm sorry, Mr. Renault—but of course old customers have to be taken care of.

LARRY. That's—that's all right. Funny, I was just about to tell your office I was leaving. (*FITCH and HATFIELD exchange looks.*) Some friends of mine—Palm Beach—private car— When do you want me to—

FITCH. No hurry. Shall we say—tomorrow morning?

LARRY. (*Thickly*) All right.

FITCH. We'd be very glad to have one of our people come in and pack your things tonight. You're probably pretty busy.

LARRY. No. No, I'll—I'll tend to it.

FITCH. Shall we say—noon tomorrow, Mr. Renault? (*LARRY merely nods his assent.*) Thank you very much. So sorry to have inconvenienced you in this way. (*Clears his throat. They give the effect of a little procession as they leave R., FITCH first, HAT-*

FIELD following. LARRY stands in the C. of the room, a sagging figure. He takes a step, kicking the empty whisky bottle as he does. He notices the seventeen cents on the table. Looks at it; laughs; sweeps it off the table.) (WARN Dim Out.)

LARRY. Seventeen cents! (He has swept the coins upstage toward the fireplace. His gaze encounters the gas logs. An idea is born in his mind. He lurches to them, looks fixedly at the gas logs and the little knob which serves to turn on the gas. Swiftly he stoops and tries it. There is heard the hiss of escaping gas. He turns it off, in a kind of triumph. A quick look around the room. Runs to the R. door; turns the lock; looks at the crack under the door; whips off his dress-coat, stuffs it and rug hurriedly under the crack. He now runs to the L. door; closes it; finds his afternoon trousers on the floor; spreads them and rug close to the crack beneath the door. A look at the windows. Uses his evening top-coat and pillows to plug up one of these, a few cushions for the other. Strips the heavy seat-cushions off the couch as he needs them. Gazes around; sees the telephone; dashes to it. His voice a croak) Hello!—I don't want to be disturbed for a while—I'm busy—(Summoning his forces again, surveys all the work he has done. Finds it good. His vanity asserts itself. He must make a good exit. Doesn't like the idea of shirt-sleeves. His coat is serving as stuffing for a door. He picks his dressing-gown as the thing to wear; dons it; ties it; looks at himself. Backs to the chair, still looking at himself, turning his head this way and that to decide which side of his famous profile is more nearly perfect. Pulls floor lamp out of his way; places chair facing fireplace so that floor lamp is shining on it. It isn't quite right artistically, he decides. He turns out all the LIGHTS except the floor lamp, which throws a glow over the chair in which he is to sit. There. That is better. A last sum-

*moning of courage. You see him pulling together the remnants of his manhood. A deep inhalation and exhalation. A rush to the gas-fixture. The sharp hiss as it is turned on. He settles himself in the armchair. The chair is so turned that we see the back of his head, a glimpse only of the famous profile, one arm over the side of the chair, as he has previously rehearsed his position.)*

## THE LIGHTS DIM OUT SLOWLY

### ACT THREE

#### SCENE III

*The Jordan drawing-room, eight o'clock. It is a large, gracious and rich room, well balanced and furnished with that distinction which comes of the combination of the best of the old and the new. At R. is a window. Up R. and up L. two semi-cylindrical niches in which stand twin vases holding graceful sprays of flowers. The opening at the back, C., is a large arched doorway opening into a foyer. Two steps lead up from the drawing-room to the foyer. Double doors down L. to the dining-room—closed.*

*Against the back wall of the foyer, facing the drawing-room, can be seen, through the archway, the figures of three HUNGARIAN MUSICIANS in their red coats.*

*As the Curtain rises the MUSICIANS are near the finish of their first number, though no one is in the room to hear them. The JORDANS' dinner guests have not yet begun to arrive. The host and hostess are not yet downstairs.*

*(After a moment MILLICENT JORDAN enters C. from*

L. *She is in evening dress, and in her haste is fastening and adjusting her pearl necklace, her arms upraised as she appears. She glances at the MUSICIANS as she passes them grouped in the foyer, nods her recognition, and stands on the top step leading down to the drawing-room, surveying the scene with the critical eye of the hostess. She comes down into the room; moves an ashtray here, a cigarette box there; adjusts a flower spray at a more pleasing angle; moves a chair an inch or two. She turns back to the foyer just as the MUSICIANS are finishing their selection; stands a moment awaiting the concluding bars. The LEADER of the MUSICIANS, violin and bow in hand, rises and bows. The other Two follow his example.)*

MILLICENT. That's very nice. But do you mind—not quite so loud? You see, the people will be right in here—(*Indicates the drawing-room*)—talking. After we've gone down to dinner you can play louder. (*The LEADER bows his assent. The other Two nod. They sit again as MILLICENT exits C. to L. Before they begin their next number there is the usual preliminary violin-bow scraping, adjusting of chairs, mopping of brows, clearing of throats. They begin another number, softly. For a few seconds the music goes on while the room is again empty.*)

(*HATTIE LOOMIS appears C. from R. She gives an interested little glance over her shoulder at the MUSICIANS as she passes into the drawing-room.*)

HATTIE. (*After a little survey of the room, looks back toward the entrance C. to R.*) Ed! Ed! Where are you? (*Comes down R.C.*)

ED. (*Speaking as he appears in the doorway*) I'm



coming. (ED LOOMIS *would be one of those insignificant, grayish-looking men if it were not that he is distinguished a trifle by his air of irascibility, due, probably, to faulty digestion and the world in which he finds himself. He is wearing a dinner coat and black tie—the one man, it later turns out, who is not in full evening dress.*)

HATTIE. She's got music.

ED. (*Very cross. To L. of her*) I hear it.

HATTIE. Now, Ed! Are you going to be like that all evening! You ought to be glad to help Millie out. It isn't going to be so terrible.

ED. Not so terrible! Calling up at quarter to seven, just when we're sitting down to dinner—and I got to get into this uniform and come over here and meet a bunch of fatheads I don't want to know, and eat a lot of fancy food I can't digest, and miss that Garbo picture I've been waiting two months for up at Eighty-sixth Street!

HATTIE. You can see that any time.

ED. (*Pacing R. and L.*) I can not! I waited all this time because it was two dollars downtown, and it's only *at* the Eighty-sixth one night, and God knows where it'll be tomorrow night.

HATTIE. Don't you want to meet Larry Renault? That's better than going to a movie.

ED. Larry Renault! That has-been!

HATTIE. And Carlotta Vance!

ED. And Jenny Lind—is *she* coming?

HATTIE. Now, Ed, Millie does a lot of things for us— Besides, who can you get at quarter to seven but relatives?

ED. All right. I'm a relative and I'm here. (*Reaches in pockets for cigarette.*)

HATTIE. (*Going up c.*) Wonder why she isn't down. I think I'll run up and see her.

ED. (*Lifting the cover of a cigarette box*) I don't suppose they've got a Lucky Strike.

HATTIE. (*As she goes out c. to L.*) Oo-ooh! Where are you, Millie? Upstairs?

ED. (*Goes from cigarette box to cigarette box, lifting each lid, inspecting the contents, and slamming the lid down again with increasing irritation. Failing in his search, he turns to the ORCHESTRA*) One of you boys got a Lucky? (*One of the MEN, without breaking his rhythm, tosses him a package of Luckies. ED removes one cigarette, tosses the pack back, and comes back down R.C. into the room, lighting his cigarette as he does so. MILLICENT and HATTIE re-enter. MILLICENT'S voice is heard just a moment before the two women actually appear.*) Thanks!

MILLICENT. —and then, on top of everything, the Ferncliffes not coming— I never had such a day in all my life!—Hello, Ed— It's all I can do to stand up. (*Crosses to sofa.*)

HATTIE. I can imagine. (*Crosses down R.*)

ED. Where's Oliver? (*Enter GUSTAVE c. from R.*)

MILLICENT. He'll be down. He's got a headache, or something

ED. Me, too.

GUSTAVE. Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Packard. (*Exits R.*)

(*DAN and KITTY PACKARD appear c. from R. They give the effect of being in full panoply. DAN'S linen seems more expansive, more glistening, his broadcloth richer, than that ordinarily seen. KITTY'S dress is the ultimate word in style and a bit beyond that in cut. When later she has occasion to turn her back one modifies one's first impression of the front decolletage, which now seems almost prudish.*)

MILLICENT. (*In that exaggerated tone of the very*

*social hostess*) How nice! It's so lovely to see you!

PACKARD. How-d'you-do, Mrs. Jordan? (*Coming down into the room. KITTY has taken his proffered arm*) This is indeed a pleasure. You know Mrs. Packard, I believe?

MILLICENT. Of course I do. So pleased to meet you again, Mrs. Packard. So sweet of you to come.

KITTY. (*Who has learned the right answer*) So—uh—so nice of you to have me.

PACKARD. (*To KITTY*) See! We're on time, Sugar! (*To MILLICENT*) She thought we were going to be late.

KITTY. No, I didn't, sweetheart.

MILLICENT. (*Who has been hovering on the verge of the necessary introductions*) Mrs. Packard, may I present my sister and my brother-in-law—Mr. and Mrs. Loomis. This is Mr. and Mrs. Packard.

KITTY. (*Surveying room. Crosses to front of sofa*) I'm pleased to meet you.

PACKARD. (*Crosses R. to ED and shakes hands*) Hello, there! Glad to know you!

HATTIE. How do you do?

ED. (*Simultaneously*) How are you?

PACKARD. (*Without stopping*) Y' know, for a minute there I had you wrong. I figured maybe you were Ferncliffe. } (*Together*)

ED. You were close. I'm pinch-hitting for him. (*HATTIE, standing next him, gives him a vicious nudge. KITTY sits sofa. ED turns to glare at HATTIE over his shoulder*) What's the matter?

MILLICENT. (*Coming c. A shade too glibly, even for an experienced hostess, and casting on Brother-in-law ED, meanwhile, a fleeting but malevolent glance*) Yes, isn't it too bad? Lord Ferncliffe was taken desperately ill late this afternoon. Neuritis. The doctors said he must have sunshine.

PACKARD. Say, that's too— (*He gets the full import of her remark*) Wait a minute! Do you mean he's not coming?

MILLICENT. Oh, impossible. They rushed him right down to Florida on a special train.

KITTY. (*A high shriek of malicious laughter, in a single note, as she hears PACKARD thus defeated*) Ha! (*Immediately smothers the sound with her palm against her mouth. PACKARD wheels on her in soundless rage. The OTHERS, startled, look at her inquiringly. KITTY turns the sound into a patently false cough.*)

MILLICENT. (*Crossing to KITTY*) Would you like a glass of water? (*KITTY shakes her head in refusal.*)

PACKARD. (*Taking cigarette from table L. of chair R.C.*) She don't need anything.

HATTIE. (*Coming to the rescue, crossing to back of sofa*) I don't care for Florida, do you? Have you ever been to Florida, Mrs. Packard?

KITTY. Oh, sure.

MILLICENT. I love it—but we're not going down this winter. (*To the PACKARDS*) Are you?

KITTY. (*In a coo*) No, I don't think we are. (*To PACKARD*) Are we going to Florida this winter, sweetheart? (*Rises.*)

PACKARD. (*Meaningly*) I wouldn't count on it if I were you.

HATTIE. Oh, isn't that too bad.

MILLICENT. I shall miss it so. It's so wonderful, not to think about anything, just to lie all day in the sun. } (*Together*)  
(*PACKARD is lighting cigarette.*)

KITTY. But you got to look out you don't blister. My skin's awful delicate. I don't dare expose it. (*Turns, as she speaks this line, so that the extremely low-cut back of her gown is in full view for the first time. ED casts a comprehensive look at the view.*)

MILLICENT. Who is going down this winter, I wonder?

PACKARD. Nobody, I guess. Looks as though the sailfish are going to get the vacation this year. *(There is a ripple of polite laughter at this little sally. Under cover of the merriment OLIVER JORDAN enters c. from L., stands for a moment on the top step, and then comes down into the room. There is about him an air of detachment—he seems to be no part of the room and its occupants. For a moment he is unnoticed by the OTHERS.)*

MILLICENT. Yes, we've fallen upon queer ways, haven't we? Goodness knows where any of us will be this time next year.

PACKARD. Oh, America will come out on top.

ED. Hello, Oliver.

PACKARD. *(Continuing)* Why, here's Oliver! *(Goes to him c. with a great show of heartiness and good-fellowship)* Well, how's the boy? Say, I've been wanting to call you up! } *(Together)*

OLIVER. Hello, Hattie. How are you?

HATTIE. I'm fine.

OLIVER. *(Continuing)* Hello, Ed.

MILLICENT. *(Through these greetings)* You've met my husband, haven't you, Mrs. Packard?

OLIVER. Yes, indeed. It's delightful to see you again.

KITTY. Yeah.

PACKARD. *(To OLIVER)* You're looking great! How've you been? How's that pain of yours? *(Enter GUSTAVE C. from R.)* Better? Did you take that lemon juice?

GUSTAVE. Doctor and Mrs. Talbot. *(Exits R.)*

OLIVER. Yes. Fine—fine!

(DOCTOR TALBOT and LUCY enter c. from R., crossing to MILLICENT.)

MILLICENT. Hello! *Darlings!* So glad to see you. Lucy, what a sweet dress!

LUCY. Hello, dear.

TALBOT. (*Simultaneously*) Milli- } (*Together*)  
cent! You're looking very lovely.

MILLICENT. (*Looking about to see where introductions are in order*) Let me see—

LUCY. (*Not stopping. Catching sight of familiar faces*) Hello, Hattie.

HATTIE. Hello, Lucy.

LUCY. How are you, Oliver?

OLIVER. I'm fine. (*At the same time DR. TALBOT and ED have briefly greeted each other.*)

MILLICENT. (*Continuing, performing the necessary introductions*) Lucy—Mrs. Packard. This is Mrs. Talbot, Mrs. Packard. Mrs. Packard, I don't believe you've met Doctor Talbot. (*LUCY crosses R. to ED and OLIVER.*)

TALBOT. Yes, we've met.

KITTY. (*Simultaneously*) Yes, I know Doctor Talbot.

PACKARD. (*Simultaneously*) Go on! He's her father confessor. Hello, Doc! (*Goes to him; grasps his hand; claps him on the shoulder*) How's the old medico! Haven't seen you round my house lately. What's the matter? Patient get well on you?

TALBOT. Yes, she's getting along very well without me—aren't you, Mrs. Packard?

KITTY. I get along better when you're looking after me.

LUCY. (*Not unkindly*) You mustn't become too dependent on Jo. He might fail you. (*The party now starts to break up into three groups: DAN and DOCTOR TALBOT, C., engage in conversation which is dominant in tone. In the second group, L., are ED,*



MILLICENT and KITTY; *in the third*, R., LUCY, HATTIE and OLIVER.)

PACAKARD. Hey, Doc! Saw your name on the members' list out at my golf club. I didn't know you belonged.

TALBOT. Oh, I've been a member there for years. Don't get a chance to play much.

PACKARD. We ought to have a game some time. What d'you go round in?

TALBOT. I'm not very good. Lucky to break a hundred.

PACKARD. Say, that's just about my speed! How about tomorrow afternoon?

TALBOT. Afraid I haven't the time for golf. If I have an hour or two I generally jump on a horse—do a little riding.

PACKARD. Ride! Say! I'll ride with you! You're talking to an old cowboy! Well, what do you think of that? (*Turning to the other GROUPS, with his genial roar*) I've found a buddy here! Hey! Mrs. Talbot! (*In the second group, made up of ED, MILLICENT and KITTY, the conversation has been simultaneous with the PACKARD-TALBOT talk.*)

MILLICENT. (*Speaks on "member there for years." Sits on sofa L.*) Well, Mrs. Packard, and what have you been doing with yourself lately?

KITTY. Oh, I don't know. Nothing much.

MILLICENT. Have you seen any of the new plays?

KITTY. Sure. I go to all the shows.

MILLICENT. We're taking you to see "Say It With Music" tonight. I hope you haven't seen it.

KITTY. I saw it twice.

ED. (*Who has been drifting aimlessly, pricks up his ears at this and joins the two women*) Where'd you say we're going tonight?

MILLICENT. "Say It With Music." They say it's so amusing.

(*In the third group, composed of LUCY, HATTIE and OLIVER, the conversation has again been simultaneous.*)

HATTIE. (*Speaking on "didn't know you belonged"*) Lucy, I never see you any more. Why don't you call me?

LUCY. Why, I love being with you, Hattie. I always think everybody's busier than I am.

OLIVER. Isn't it insane? We never see the people we want to in this New York. The weeks go by, and—

HATTIE. Remember those grand days in that big Murray Hill house of yours!

LUCY. We did have fun when we were kids.

HATTIE. It's positively frightening. You can see life getting the best of you.

OLIVER. Give it the best. What's the difference?

LUCY. (*As PACKARD, ending his conversation with TALBOT, says: "Hey! Mrs. Talbot!"*) Yes, Mr. Packard?

PACKARD. (*The groups now quiet*) Just discovered your husband and I have got a lot in common.

LUCY. So I understand. (*Moving toward PACKARD, C., as she talks. TALBOT crosses to OLIVER*) Why don't you and Mrs. Packard have dinner with us next week? How would Thursday suit you? There's an idea! I want you all to come to dinner at our house next Thursday. (*ED crosses R. to HATTIE.*)

MILLCENT. That'll be lovely.

KITTY. We'd be delighted.

ED. (*Has crossed to HATTIE, under cover of this general outburst. Speaks on "How would Thursday suit you." With more than his usual irritability*) We're going to see "Say It With Music."

HATTIE. Well?

ED. We *saw* it!

HATTIE. All right. (*Crosses to behind sofa.*)

LUCY. (*Not stopping*) And the Ferncliffes! I'd love to ask the Ferncliffes. Where are they, Millicent?

MILLICENT. My dear, didn't I tell you? Poor dear Bunny—that's what we call Ferncliffe—was taken desperately sick this afternoon, and they had to whirl him down South—(*Enter GUSTAVE C. from R.*)—to save his life. (*A mildly surprised look from OLIVER.*)

GUSTAVE. Miss Carlotta Vance! (*KITTY rises.*)

LUCY. Why, how ghastly!

TALBOT. (*Simultaneously*) What was the trouble? (*GUSTAVE exits C. to L.*) } (*Together*)

(*CARLOTTA VANCE appears C. from R. A resplendent figure. And then, for good measure, a Pekinese dog, which she carries under one arm. She comes straight on in to C., talking as she appears.*)

CARLOTTA. Millicent darling, do forgive me.

MILLICENT. Carlotta—!

CARLOTTA. I *am* so sorry. He *wouldn't* stay home. He cried and cried. I just *had* to bring him. He's so spoiled since I brought him to America. Aren't you, Mussolini?

MILLICENT. Isn't he sweet? Carlotta, have you met—

CARLOTTA. What do you think of Ferncliffe! Isn't Bunny a swine! Running off to Florida and ruining your whole dinner! (*A sweeping gesture that tosses the other guests into the discard.*)

MILLICENT. Darling—

CARLOTTA. You know, I left here, and went straight to my hotel, and there was his telegram—

"Off on a fishing trip—I love your America—never felt so well in my life— Won't you join us. Bunny."  
(LUCY and HATTIE plunge valiantly forward to cover MILLICENT'S discomfiture. Their voices are high and clear. They speak simultaneously. An embarrassed laugh from MILLICENT.)

LUCY. (*Crossing c. in the general direction of PACKARD and ED at R.*) Have you seen that wonderful German picture at the Europa? Really, they have the most marvelous way of doing things, and their attention to detail—no matter how small the part.

CARLOTTA. (*Crossing to him at R.C. chair*) Oliver, darling, here you are. Aren't you glad to see me?

OLIVER. (*Gracefully*) Carlotta, you know I love you.

CARLOTTA. Then you're not cross with me? (*Turning to PACKARD*) You'd have thought I'd done something terrible. (*ED starts over L., stopping c. a brief moment to give groups a disgusted survey, then continuing to L. of sofa.*) Just because I sold my Jordan stock. I was stony broke, and a man came along and made me the most wonderful offer, right out of the blue—well, I grabbed it! That wasn't so terrible, was it?

OLIVER. What do you think, Packard? Was that so terrible? (*His gaze is fixed on PACKARD.*)

PACKARD. Well, business is business. Every fellow's got to look out for himself. That's the kind of world it is. (*GUSTAVE and DORA enter c. from L.*)

CARLOTTA. It must be wonderful to be a sheltered woman. A man to look after you so that you never have to worry for yourself.

PACKARD. Say, I should think that ought to be a cinch for you! (*Laughs at his own witticism.*)

LUCY. The trouble with a shelter is that in a storm it sometimes falls down around your ears.

OLIVER. I suppose we all dream of being something we're not. There was a time when I thought I

was Bernard Shaw. (*He trails off as GUSTAVE appears with cocktails.*)

HATTIE. (TALBOT joins group at sofa. Making her leap in the direction of TALBOT) Do you know I'd rather go away in the winter than in the summer. I love New York in the summer. Everybody's out of town and you can just have the city to yourself. (*Joins MILLICENT and KITTY below the sofa. The conversation is simultaneous with that of the other group.*)

TALBOT. Matter of fact, New York is healthier in the summer. Though it's all one to me—I have to work the whole year round.

MILLICENT. I've never been in New York in the summer. I don't think I could stand it. Those buildings must be like ovens.

TALBOT. In time I think every building will be artificially cooled, just as it's now artificially heated. After all, why not? There's no reason why we should be more uncomfortable in the summer than we are in the winter, simply because of the elements. We protect ourselves against the cold—why not against the heat?

KITTY. I like it here in the summer. I've had some swell times on pent-house parties.

HATTIE. Oh, all my life I've wanted to be a pent-house girl, like one of Arno's pictures in *The New Yorker*.

ED. Yeah. You'd do well at that. (*A little laugh from the others.*)

MILLICENT. Of course the ideal life is to be in New York just about three months in the year.

TALBOT. Wait a minute! What about us doctors? What have we got to do—follow you around? (*Again a laugh.*)

MILLICENT. Well, of course then we won't need doctors. (*More light laughter.*)

*(In both groups the conversation has simmered down to polite nothingness. As it nears this stage the figures of DORA and GUSTAVE stand a moment, and slowly approach the guests. DORA is carrying the canapes, GUSTAVE the cocktails. DORA is deathly pale, her eyes are red-rimmed from weeping, her whole face a mask of tragedy. GUSTAVE, too, is pale, his expression stricken and guilty. The adhesive tape bandages are still on forehead and cheek. The pace of BOTH is leaden, funereal. DORA goes first to MILLICENT'S group, GUSTAVE goes to OLIVER'S. In each group there are little murmurs of comment or appreciation as the trays are passed. As DORA offers the canapes)*

KITTY. Oh, aren't they pretty! What do you suppose this is?

HATTIE. Be careful! They're hot.

KITTY. Mm—caviar!

TALBOT. I know I'm going to eat too many of these.

MILLICENT. Nonsense, they can't hurt you. There's nothing to them. *(As GUSTAVE offers the cocktails to the other group the conversation is simultaneous with that of the first group.)*

PACKARD. Ah, here we are! Well, I certainly needed this— What's in them?

OLIVER. I think Gustave generally uses rum. I don't like gin in my cocktail.

LUCY. *(Doesn't drink)* Oh, aren't they good!

CARLOTTA. This is the kind you get in Cuba, isn't it? *(Simultaneously GUSTAVE and DORA, having served their respective groups, move toward the opposite group, GUSTAVE to L.; DORA to R. As they try to pass each other they come face to face; stop for*



*one second as their eyes meet, DORA's accusing, GUSTAVE'S beseeching. For one second the air is charged with emotion, then they cross and resume their serving.)*

PACKARD. *(His voice breaking the GUSTAVE-DORA tension)* Hey! Don't go far away with those! *(The two groups now break and drift about a little. There is a little desultory conversation.)*

MILLICENT. Let me see— We're all here except Mr. Renault. I hope he hasn't forgotten.

CARLOTTA. Oh, he'll be here. He's just staging an entrance. *(ED snaps fingers for cocktail. CARLOTTA sits on sofa. PACKARD, OLIVER and LUCY R. DORA above chairs R.C. MILLICENT and TALBOT C. HATTIE, KITTY and ED L. GUSTAVE down L.)*

KITTY. Oh, I'm crazy to see him. I think he's gorgeous!

PACKARD. Where's that shaker? I want another one of these.

*(PAULA appears C. from L. Being on her way out to dinner with Ernest, she is in evening clothes, with an evening coat. She stands on the top step, her eyes searching the GROUP.)*

TALBOT. I'm going to break a rule and have another one myself.

MILLICENT. You all know my daughter, Paula. *(A little murmur of acknowledgment from the group.)*

OLIVER. Hello, there! Where's your young man?

MILLICENT. Yes, where's Ernest?

PAULA. He's outside in the car. He turned shy on me, and wouldn't come up. I like this party. I may stay here.

LUCY. Hello, Paula dear! How's the future bride? When are you going to be married?

PAULA. Huh?—Oh, I— Where's Mr. Renault? Wasn't he going to be here?

MILLICENT. Yes, he's coming. He's not here yet.

PAULA. Oh! (*A little fleeting look of anxiety crosses her face.*)

PACKARD. She's hanging around to see the movie star. The rest of us don't stand a chance. (*GUSTAVE refills PACKARD'S glass. DORA crosses to group down L. A little laugh from the group, in which PAULA joins half-heartedly.*)

CARLOTTA. Oh, Larry's always late. He makes a point of it.

MILLICENT. Well, we'll wait a few minutes. He can't be long now. (*Attempts to start the conversational ball rolling*) Of course, with traffic what it is, it's a wonder anybody gets anywhere. (*The company has broken up into three groups, busy with chit-chat. In one group down L. are CARLOTTA, ED and TALBOT. In a second group up L.C., OLIVER, KITTY, HATTIE. In the third, down R. which MILLICENT now joins, are PACKARD and LUCY. GUSTAVE and DORA move about with the cocktails and canapes. During all this PAULA is restlessly glancing toward the door off R., never giving her full attention to any one person in the room. Bits of conversation come up; one hears a fragment from this and that group. It is all recognizable as something one has heard many times before.*)

PACKARD. Don't know what New York's coming to. Traffic getting worse and worse. Keep on putting up high buildings. What happens! (*KITTY laughs loudly. OLIVER and HATTIE join in politely. PAULA asks GUSTAVE for cocktail.*)

TALBOT. But if Germany can't pay—what then? You can't get blood out of a stone.

ED. That's what I say.

KITTY. They say it's getting warmer every win-

ter. It's on account of the Gulf Stream. They say there'll be palm trees growing where the Empire State is.

OLIVER. Well, that'll be nice. (*DORA is at group down R.*)

MILLICENT. Of course, I don't get a minute to read. The only time is when I go to bed at night, and then I'm so sleepy—

TALBOT. That's very true.

ED. The first thing they've got to do is cut salaries. Look at what they pay their stars! (*PACKARD laughs. GUSTAVE to TALBOT and ED to refill glasses.*)

LUCY. But the trouble with children today is that they're blasé at fourteen. They've been everywhere. They've seen everything. They've done everything. (*GUSTAVE takes tray; collects glasses from CARLOTTA'S group. DORA is above group down R.*)

OLIVER. But most people don't go to the opera for the music. They go to be seen.

CARLOTTA. Oh, I know! You become just as attached to them as if they were human beings.

HATTIE. It's just steak and lamp chops over and over again. I wish somebody would invent a new meat. (*The ORCHESTRA starts the last number.*)

MILLICENT. (*Speaking to the GUESTS as a whole*) I don't think we'll wait for Mr. Renault. He must have been delayed.

CARLOTTA. (*Rises and crosses to C.*) Yes, let's have dinner. I'm starving. And so is Benito. (*Turns to the Pekinese in her arms*) Aren't you, Mussolini?

MILLICENT. (*To GUSTAVE*) All right, Gustave. You may serve dinner. (*GUSTAVE bows, opens doors L. and exits. DORA goes off up L.*) I hope Mr. Renault won't be offended. (*KITTY comes to CARLOTTA; pets dog. TALBOT starts out. They ALL start to move toward the L. door.*) (*WARN Curtain.*)

PACKARD. (*Following MILLICENT with LUCY*) Last come, last served. That's the way we used to do out in Montana. We used to swarm around that cook shack like a bunch of locusts. And the way those beans and biscuits vanished—boy! The guy who was late was out of luck. He could eat grass.

(PACKARD and TALBOT are off L., following MILLICENT and LUCY.)

LUCY. (*Speaking on "Didn't get a bite of lunch"*) Millicent, I hope you haven't got too good a dinner, or mine will suffer by contrast.

MILLICENT. My dear, I'm having just the simplest meal in the world. I couldn't have less. (*They are off L.*)

ED. (*Looking at his wrist watch*) Half-past eight. We won't get to that show till the second act.

HATTIE. I thought you didn't want to see it.

ED. If I've got to go I don't want to get there in the middle. (*They are off L.*)

TALBOT. I didn't get a bite of lunch. Reached the hospital at ten o'clock and was there until nearly five. Then I found an office full of patients, and I never did come up for air.

KITTY. (*Comes down to CARLOTTA*) Isn't he cute! I've had a lot of Pekineses, but I don't have any luck with them. They die on me. (*CARLOTTA snatches the dog away from KITTY; starts toward L. door.*)

OLIVER. (*Coming down to KITTY*) Ladies!

OLIVER. (*As KITTY and CARLOTTA are about to go L.*) You know what they do in Vienna?—they eat their dinner after the theatre instead of before.

KITTY. In Madrid they eat dinner at ten o'clock, and the shows don't begin until midnight. (*She is off L.*)

CARLOTTA. Really! What time is sunrise? Noon? (*She exits L. PAULA remains the sole occupant of the room, nervous, distrait, looking toward the foyer in the direction from which the late guest would come.*)

OLIVER. (*Comes back to her*) What's the matter, Paula? Something wrong?

PAULA. (*Pulling her wrap up about her shoulders*) No, no. I'm just going, Dad.

OLIVER. (*Kisses her cheek tenderly, just a touch; passes a hand over her hair*) Good-night, my dear. (*OLIVER goes out L.*)

(*The GUESTS being out of the room, the MUSIC slowly comes up in volume. PAULA, on the steps, turns and peers fixedly out in the direction from which LARRY would come, C. from R. Turns a step or two toward the room. Sees a cocktail on the table R.; goes quickly to it; snatches up a full glass; drains it. Turns, wavers with indecision, then, with a rush, goes out C. to R. Through this we have heard faintly the CONVERSATION and LAUGHTER of the GUESTS on their way to the dining-room. Now a burst of LAUGHTER comes up at some special sally. For some fifteen or twenty seconds, while the stage is empty, the MUSIC plays on, a romantic, throbbing Hungarian waltz.*)

## THE CURTAIN FALLS

# DINNER AT EIGHT

## PROPERTY PLOT

### ACT I

#### SCENE I

Divan R.C.

End Table—L. of divan

Cigarette-box.

Ashtray.

Match-box.

Small Table—below mantel—Lamp.

Long Table up c. front of windows.

2 Lamps, L. and R.

2 Books R.

Flowers c.

Magazines R. and L.

Easy Chair—L.C.—*Herald-Tribune*.

Desk L.—French Phone.

Address book.

Paper, pencil, pen and stand.

Personal cards, envelopes.

Calendar, scratch pad.

6 Letters, opened.

Announcement card with ticket attached.



Phone book top of desk.

Letter-opener.

Desk set.

Desk Chair.

Waste Basket—down L.

Breakfast Tray (folding), L.C.

Plate of popovers.

Coffee cup.

Saucer, sugar and creamer (lump sugar).

Silverware.

Glass of orange juice.

Napkin.

1 Letter, opened.

1 Letter, Cooper Union.

1 Letter, announcement card of night club opening.

Carpet.

Mantelpiece—urns R. and L.

Over mantel—picture.

Over desk—picture.

On windows—Venetian blinds (full open).

Gloss curtains.

Drapes.

*Off Right:*

Silver coffee pot.

Silver card tray—radiogram (not sealed).

Bed linen (2 sheets).

Parcel containing piece of blue velvet ( $\frac{1}{2}$  yd.).

Blue flat crepe evening gown (not worn).

Wrist watch (PAULA'S).

*Off Left:*

Box (Charvette), size of man's suit-box.

MILLICENT'S dress.

Dress.

## SCENE II

Desk—c. Standard telephone R.  
Desk fittings—blotter, inkstand, etc.  
Letters.  
Contracts and letters (opened).  
Scratch pad.  
Important letter.  
Pencil c.  
2 Large books.  
Pen and holder set L. of inkstand.  
Desk Chair—back of desk.  
Chair—R. of desk.  
Stuffed leather chair L. of desk.  
Wooden Filing Cabinet—up R.—letter to be filed (on  
filing cabinet).  
Bookcase—up L.—Book Backs.  
Clipper ship model on top.  
Bookcase—up R. Book Backs.  
Clipper ship model on top.  
Curtain—on window R.  
Portrait (Oliver Jordan) above fireplace.  
Coat-tree—L. above door.  
*Personal Props:*  
Business card (Isadore C. Greenbaum) in CAR-  
LOTTA'S handbag.  
Watch and chain. PACKARD.

## SCENE III

Dressing Table—down R.  
Clock.  
Arden case (closed).  
Cigarette box.  
Hair brush.  
Jewel case (open).  
Pearls (in jewel case tray).

Bracelet, rings (in jewel case tray).

Atomizer.

Mascara and brush.

Orange stick.

Comb.

Powder jar.

Dressing Table Bench:

Doll (red hair).

Bed jacket (feathered, across doll).

Chair up c. Doll (Pierette).

Bed up L. 2 White crepe sheets.

Spread.

6 Pillows.

Nail buffer (to match dresser set).

Puzzle under movie magazine.

Hand mirror (of dresser set).

On floor around bed:

2 Movie magazines (1 open).

Tabloid newspaper.

2 Detective Story novels (one open on bed base).

Under Bed:

Book, *Aspects of the Adult Mind*.

Foot of bed: Doll (Pierrot) sitting on bed base.

Bed Table—R. of bed—powder jar and puff.

Movie magazine. Empty candy box on mag.

Tray (on candy box).

Chocolate pot, cups and saucers.

Spoon in bowl of whipped cream.

Pitcher, sugar bowl and napkin.

Off R.:

Large pink satin and gold candy box—candy in box.

Hat box (hat—KITTY'S).

Personal Props:

Watch and chain (TALBOT).

## SCENE IV

Off R.—Tea tray:

Cream pitcher—plate of cakes, teapot, sugar-bowl, plate of sandwiches, 3 cups and saucers, 3 knives and spoons, 3 napkins.

Pair of trousers and suspenders.

Evening newspaper.

Tea-table cloth on at rise. Below chair L.C.

Venetian blinds at half.

## ACT II

## SCENE I

Sofa (small L.C.—2 cushions R. and L.)

End Table—R. of sofa—French phone.

Empty whiskey bottle.

1 Glass high-ball.

Desk (small) R.C. Writing materials.

Pencil, paper, envelopes.

Pen and holder set.

On top Desk—

8 x 11 Photo PAULA, silver frame, L.

8 x 11 Photo LARRY, silver frame, R.

2 Small urns on mantelpiece R. and L.

Desk chair (low back).

Waste-basket up L. of desk.

Console up L.

Console up R.

Picture above console L.

Mirror above console R.

Easy chair R.C.—Pillow.

Small armchair down R.

Fireplace—gas logs—up C.

Picture above fireplace.

Draw curtains on L. and R. open.

*Personal Props:*

Cuff links (LARRY).

Dime, nickel, 2 pennies (LARRY).

Quarter, mirror, compact (PAULA's bag).

*Off Right:*

Cuff links.

Flat whiskey bottle (wrapped in tissue—full).

Hotel bill in envelope (HATFIELD).

Portable table (room service).

Pot of coffee, cup, saucer, plate of buttered toast—cover on it.

Sugar, cream.

Check and pencil (WAITER's pocket).

## SCENE II

## Desk R.C.—Desk Fittings:

Blotter, desk set—blotter.

Scratch pad.

Pen and paper-knife.

Inkwell—2 pencils.

Appointment pad.

2 French phones.

Photo—LUCY in frame.

Photo—SON in frame.

Buzzer on desk—heard off stage L.

2 Medical magazines.

## Desk chair.

Chair (patient's) L. of desk.

Revolving bookcase L.C.

Bench up L.C.

Bust (Hippocrates) up c. over door.

Clock (banjo type) L. of door.

Barometer R. above door.

*Off Right:*

Stethoscope (TALBOT).

*Off Left:*

Chimes.

Slip of paper (ALDEN).

*Off up c.:*

Vial—Nitrate of amyl.

Card—index box.

Coat—handkerchief in pocket (TALBOT).

Towel.

### SCENE III

Table L.C.

Kitchen chair—above table.

Kitchen chair R. of table.

Cupboard—L.:

..

Long carving knife.

Knife-sharpener.

Decanter of brandy (on 2nd shelf).

Glasses, dishes, etc., to fill.

Cupboard—R.:

Radio.

15 Dinner plates on shelf.

2 Glasses on 2nd shelf L.

1 Kitchen glass on sink.

Soap above sink.

Glasses, dishes, etc., to fill.

Frigidaire—c.:

Bottle of Kalak water on top.

Bottle of milk in Frigidaire.

Bowl of parsley R.

Props to fill.

Hook—wall c.—apron.

*Off Left:*

Letter for GUSTAVE.

Mixing bowl, large spoon, batter.

Tray (remains of tea from Act I, Scene IV).

Lobster Aspic on large platter.

Large two-pronged fork on platter.



Wedding ring in handkerchief (DORA).  
Toothache bandage (MRS. WENDEL).

## SCENE IV

Venetian blinds fully closed.

Tall vase (copper) on table up c.

Chair c. (turned to R.).

*Off Right:*

Long-stemmed Talisman roses in box with card  
in envelope in box.

Tray—whiskey decanter.

Soda.

2 Glasses.

Bowl of ice.

Tongs.

*Personal Props.:*

Check—certified—in CARLOTTA'S handbag.

Pocket address book (OLIVER).

## ACT III

## SCENE I

## KITTY'S Bedroom

On dressing table:

Mascara and brush.

Comb.

Hairbrush.

Jewel box, closed.

4 Bracelets in jewel box (1 large).

Hand mirror.

Buffer.

Powder-puff and jar.

Clock.

Arden case (open).

On bed table L.:

Cigarette box.

Atomizer.

Powder jar.

On bed:

Evening dress (KITTY'S).

Doll (red hair) among pillows on bed.

Doll (Pierrot) over foot of bed.

Evening slippers (below chair c.).

Doll (Pierrette), chair up c.

Off Right:

4 Orchids in florist's box (open).

Ermine evening wrap.

Evening-bag (riveted shut).

Compact.

Lipstick.

Cigarette case.

Off Left:

Bath towel.

Face towel.

## SCENE II

Pillow on floor Left of easy chair.

Empty whiskey bottle in waste basket R.

Trousers on floor near door L.

Shirt off through door L.

Shoes on floor—I above end table—I above divan R.

Topcoat on divan, L. end.

Newspaper on floor, crumpled, under divan.

Phone on end table.

Glass.

17 Cents.

Empty flat whiskey bottle.

On desk:

Photo LARRY in frame.

Photo PAULA (no frame) leaning against LARRY'S photo.

2 Small rugs down R. and L.

Off Right :

Silver frame wrapped in brown paper (EDDIE).

Cuff links (EDDIE).

Room charts (HATFIELD).

Telegram (MAX).

Off upstage:

Compressed air tank (escaping gas).

### SCENE III

Chair R.C.

End table R.C. (L. of chair).

Cigarette box.

Ashtray, matches, cigarettes (cork tip).

Small round table R. of sofa L.

Cigarette box.

Ashtray.

Cigarettes (cork tip).

Chair, up R.

Chair up L.

Bench front of window R.:

Cigarette box.

Ashtray.

Cigarettes (cork tip).

2 Urns in R. and L. niches—flowers.

Drapes—on window R.

Drapes on c. door.

Cymbolum up c. on platform.

2 Chairs up c. on platform.

Off Right: Small piano.

Off c. to L.: Tray—2 plates of canapes and appetizers.

Tray—11 cocktails (glasses).

1 large cocktail shaker.

Personal Props:

1 Pack Lucky Strikes, opened and not entirely filled (MUSICIAN).

## DINNER AT EIGHT

### PUBLICITY THROUGH YOUR LOCAL PAPERS

The press can be an immense help in giving publicity to your productions. In the belief that the best reviews from the New York and other large papers are always interesting to local audiences, and in order to assist you, we are printing below several excerpts from those reviews.

To these we have also added a number of suggested press notes which may be used either as they stand or changed to suit your own ideas and submitted to the local press.

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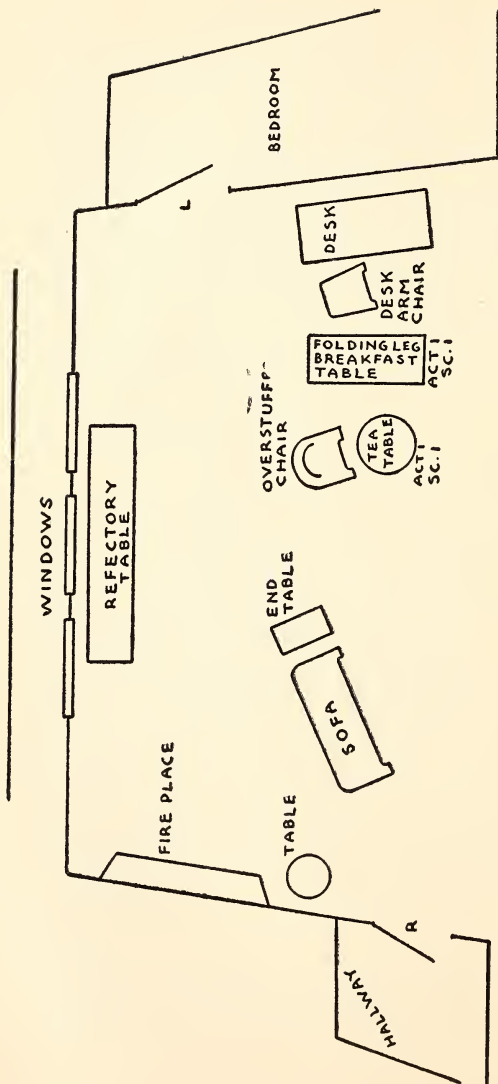
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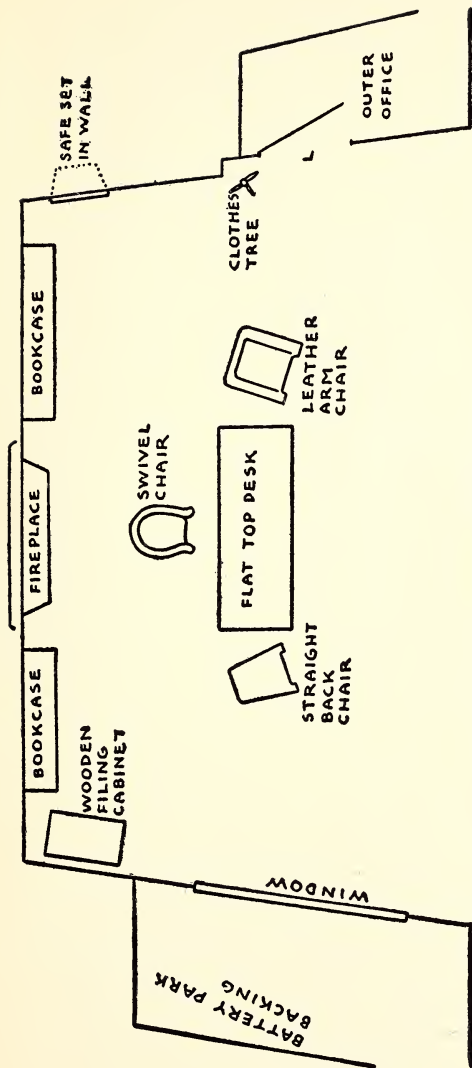
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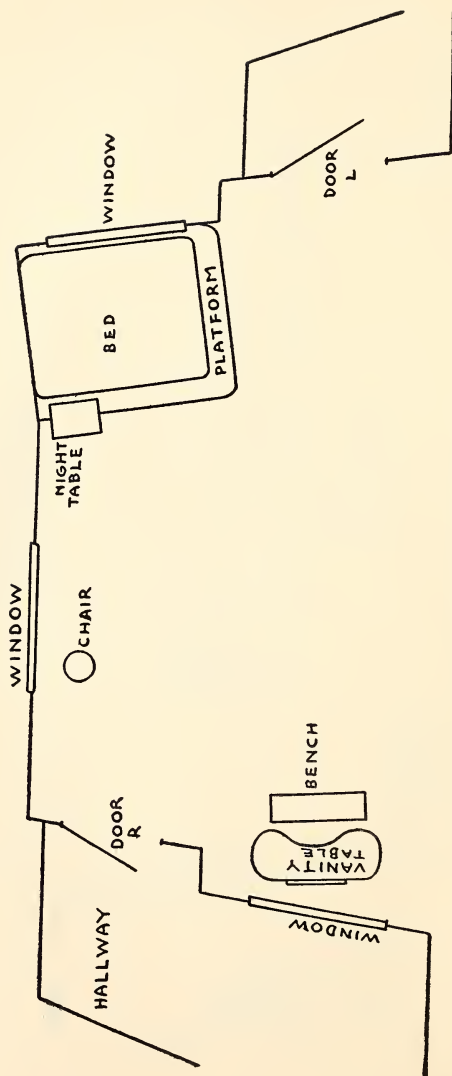




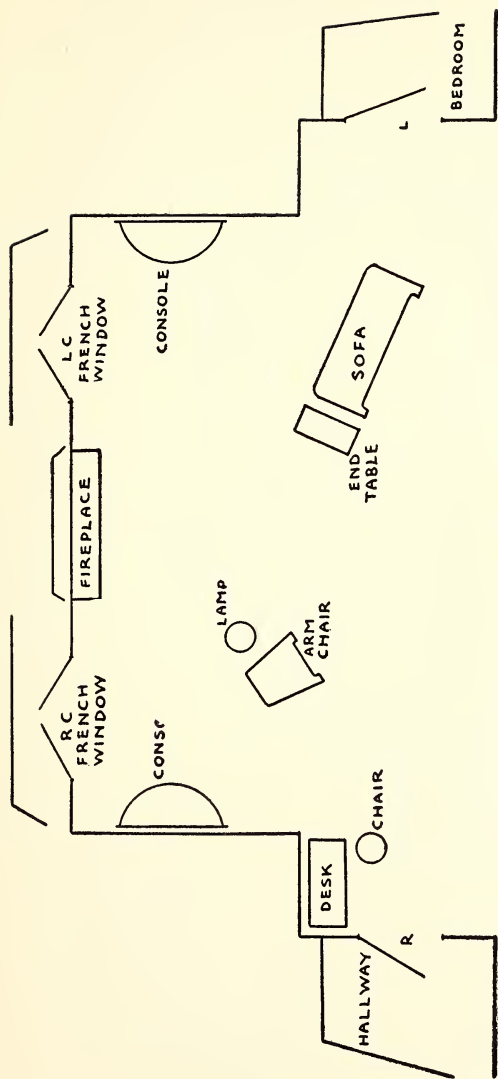
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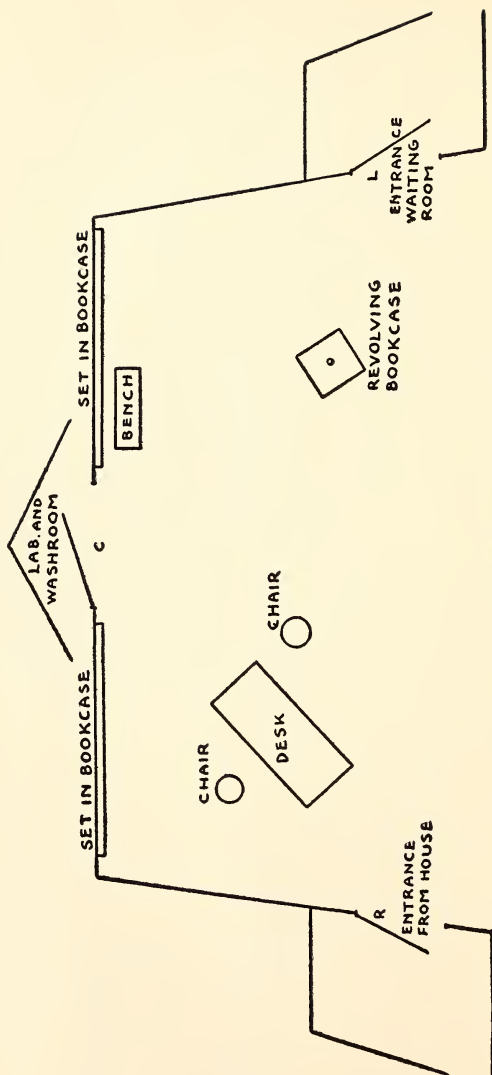
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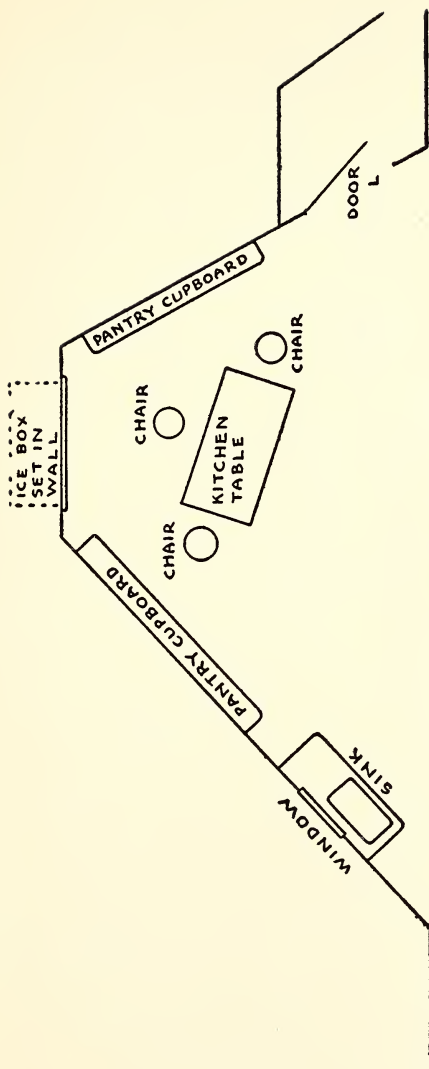
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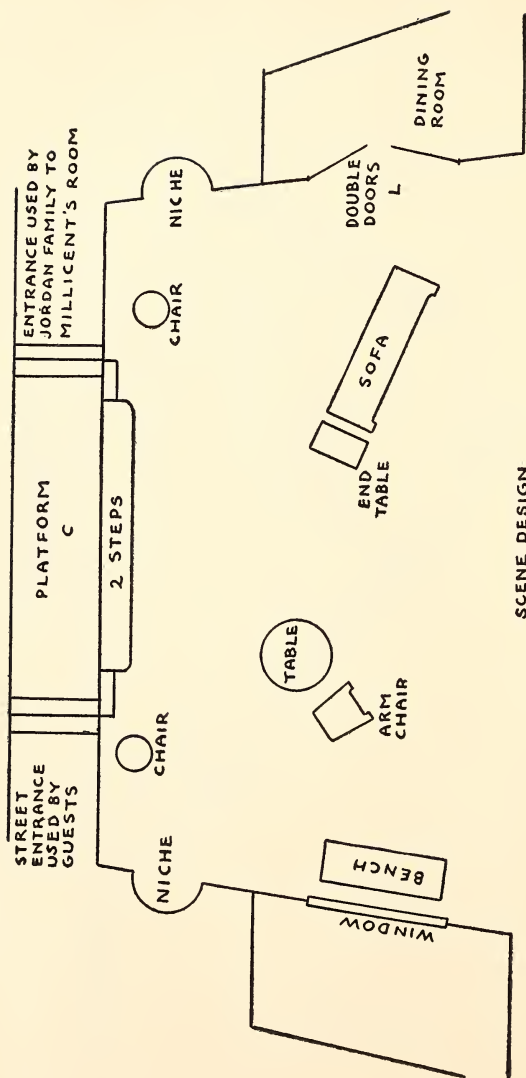
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SCENE DESIGN  
ACT 2 SCENE 2  
"DINNER AT EIGHT"



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ACT 2 SCENE 3  
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Miss Spettigue. The young men at once lay their plans and  
ask the objects of their affections to join them at their  
rooms for luncheon—in order to meet Donna Lucia D'-  
Alvadorez, Charley's aunt, who is expected to arrive from  
Brazil. Miss Spettigue and Miss Verdun accept the invita-  
tion, but the millionaire Donna from the antipodes sends a  
telegram saying that she will have to defer her visit for a  
few days. The problem is solved at once by forcing another  
undergraduate of the name of Lord Fancourt Babberley  
into a black satin skirt, a lace fichu, a pair of mitts, an old-  
fashioned cap and wig. As Charley's Aunt, then, this old  
frump is introduced to the sweethearts, to Jack Chesney's  
father, and to Stephen Spettigue. Unexpectedly the real  
aunt turns up, but she assumes the name of Mrs. Smith or  
Smythe. To attain his object,—viz., the rich widow's hand—  
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